# THE Sureſt and Safeſt VVay OF THRIVING.

OR,

A Conviction of that Grand Miſtake in many, *That what is given to the Poor, is a loſs to their Eſtate*; which is directly contrary, as to the experiences of the Charitable, ſo to the teſtimony of *Gods Spirit* in divers places of Scripture: As,

Prov. 11. 24. *There is that ſcattereth, and yet increaſeth; There is that with-holdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.*

Prov. 19. 17. *He that hath pity on the Poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again.*

Luke 6. 38. *Give, and it ſhall be given to you again, good meaſure, preſſed down, and ſhaken together, and running over.*

Pſalm 37. 26. *He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his Seed is bleſſed.*

Deus bis ſolvit hoc fœnus, ſcilicet ſemel in terra, ſecundo in cœlo. In terra enim eleemoſynariis multiplicat opes, in cœlo autem longe plura, & majora rependit. *Cornelius a Lapide*, in *Prov.* 19. 17.

By *Tho. Gouge*, Miniſter of the Goſpel.

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*C. Smith.*

# THE SUREST and SAFEST WAY OF THRIVING.

MAT. 10. 41, 42.

*He that receiveth a* Prophet *in the name of a* Prophet, *ſhall receive a* Prophets *reward: and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, ſhall receive a righteous mans reward.*

*And whoſoever ſhall give unto one of theſe littles ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a Diſciple, verily I ſay unto you, he ſhall in no wiſe loſe his reward.*

THE troubles whereunto God bringeth his Miniſters and People, though they be many and great, yet are they not more, and greater, than the comforts which he affordeth unto them, to ſupport and incourage them in their troubles. Inſtance this Chapter, and the Sermon of Chriſt therein recorded, concerning thoſe ſore Tryals whereunto his Church and Children ſhould be brought. As any kind of affliction is foretold, a proper and peculiar Conſolation is uſually annexed. Therefore to eſtabliſh the hearts of his ſuffering Servants, and to incourage their Succourers, he cloſes up his Sermon with the words of the Text; wherein he declareth not only that high account which he had of his Miniſters, and People themſelves, but alſo of them who ſhould yield any relief, or upon his account ſhew kindneſs to them; aſſuring them, *That he who receiveth a Prophet in the name of a Prophet, ſhould receive a Pro-*

*phets Reward*: And *he that receiveth a Righteous Man in the name of a Righteous Man, ſhould receive a Righteous Mans Reward.*

The words in brief contain, A *Declaration of that great benefit which they bring to themſelves, who afford any Relief and Succour to Miniſters, or other Saints*; teaching, *That there is no ſuch way to fill our Treaſures, as by emptying them for God.*

For the clearing of the words, I ſhall briefly ſhew you:

1. Who is here meant by a *Prophet*; and who by a *Righteous Man.*
2. What is meant by *receiving* them.
3. What is the *Reward* which followeth thereupon.

I. For the firſt, Who is here meant by a *Prophet*; and who by a *Righteous Man.*

By a *Prophet*, our Saviour here meaneth not only extraordinary Miniſters, ſuch as were immediately and extraordinarily inſpired by the *Holy Ghoſt*; or who had extraordinary Revelations to foretel things to come: but alſo ordinary Miniſters of the Word, and Interpreters of the Scriptures; as *Joh.* 4. 44. *Rev.* 11. 18.

By *Righteous Men*, he meaneth his Saints, or ſuch as teſtifie their Juſtification thorough Faith in Chriſt, by their Sanctification, and fruits of a good Conſcience, whom commonly the Scripture ſtileth *Saints.*

II. For the ſecond, What is meant by *receiving theſe?*

For Anſwer thereunto, you muſt know, there are two things whereunto this receiving may have a reſpect.

1. To the *Word* and *Meſſage* of a Miniſter; and ſo it ſignifies, the hearkning to, and imbracing their holy Counſel and Doctrine.

2. To the *Perſon* of a Miniſter; and ſo it ſignifies the harbouring, or ſhewing kindneſs to him; as is evident from the inſtance of *cold water*, given unto a *Prophet*, or *Righteous Man*, expreſſed in the following verſe. Both theſe are implied under this phraſe of *receiving a Prophet*, *viz.* His *Doctrine*, by imbracing, and ſubmitting to it; and his *Perſon*, by harbouring, ſuccouring, and relieving him according to his need.

*By*

*By the receiving a Prophet in the name of a Prophet*, is meant a ſuccouring and relieving him *for his particular Callings-ſake*, *eo nomine*, becauſe he is a Prophet. So *by receiving a Righteous Man in the name of a Righteous Man*, intendeth the ſame thing; namely, the relieving him, *for his general* Callings-ſake, becauſe he is a Chriſtian, a Child of God, and a Member of Chriſt.

III. For the third particular, What is here meant by *the Reward of a Prophet, and of a Righteous Man?* I anſwer, Theſe phraſes of *receiving a Prophet, and of a Righteous Mans Reward*, may be taken *Actively*, or *Paſſively*: *Actively*, for that Reward which a *Prophet*, or a *Righteous Man* giveth: *Paſſively*, for that which is by God given to the one, and to the other. *The Reward which a Prophet giveth*, is Miniſterially to preach the Word of Reconciliation to ſuch as receive them, as *Peter* did to *Cornelius*, Act. 10. 34. &c. To pray for them, as *Abraham* for *Abimelech*, Gen. 20. 7, 17. And to bleſs them, as *Melchiſedeck* bleſſed *Abraham*, Gen. 14. 19.

The Reward which a Righteous Man giveth, is privately to inſtruct and edifie, to pray for, and to be a good Pattern and Example of Righteouſneſs, to ſuch as entertain, or otherwiſe relieve him.

*The Reward which is given by God* to either of theſe, for that kindneſs which any ſhew unto them, is ſuch a ſurpaſſing and excellent weight of Glory, as cannot be expreſſed by the tongue of Men, or Angels, yet different in degrees; as is evident, *Dan.* 12. 3.

Some take theſe phraſes, *Of receiving a Prophet*, and a *Righteous Mans Reward*, in the former ſenſe, *Actively*; and others, *Paſſively*. I conceive it may be taken in both.

The words thus explained, do afford unto us ſeveral points of Doctrine.

From the Duty here expreſſed of receiving, and relieving *Prophets*, and *Righteous Men*, with the manner of ſetting it down, we may obſerve.

1. Doct. *That all needful ſuccour, and good entertainment; is to be afforded to Miniſters of the Goſpel.* This is the main and principal point intended.

2. Doct. *Chriſtian-kindneſs is to be ſhewed not only to Miniſters, but alſo to all the Members of Chriſt.* For our bleſſed Saviour contents not himſelf to have mentioned a *Prophet*, but alſo addeth *a Righteous Man.*

Theſe two ſorts make up *the Houſhold of Faith*; to whom the Apoſtle exhorteth Chriſtians *eſpecially* to do good, *Gal.* 6. 10.

Q. *Is our Charity to extend no farther?*

*A.* Yes, even to all that are in want, but *eſpecially* to ſuch as have a particular Relation to Chriſt, as being his Members, or Miniſters; becauſe Chriſt in them is after an eſpecial manner ſuccoured and relieved. It will be therefore our wiſdom to take notice of the extent of this Duty; and in all we do, either for Chriſtians, or others, to ſee to it, that what we do, is done for the Lords, and for Conſcience ſake; to the one in compaſſion to his Members, to the other in obedience to his Will.

4. Doct. *According to the kindneſs which we ſhew, ſhall our reward be.* He that receiveth, and relieveth a *Prophet*, ſhall receive a *Prophets Reward*: And he that receiveth and relieveth a *Righteous Man*, ſhall receive *the Reward of a Righteous Man.*

## Verſe 42.

*And whoſoever ſhall give to drink unto one of theſe little ones a Cup of cold water only in the name of a Diſciple, he ſhall in no wiſe loſe his Reward.*

Theſe words are added by our Saviour to the former, to anticipate ſome Objections which might be made thereupon; as alſo more fully to explain the forementioned points.

1. *Obj.* May be thus made, Theſe Preachers and Profeſſors of the Goſpel are but mean perſons, and little in eſteem, what great Reward can be expected for entertaining them?

A. *As little as they be, be they as inconſiderable and contemptible*

*temptible as the proud world would make them, yet are they not ſo little in the eyes of the Lord, but that he will reward all ſuch as are friendly to them.*

2. *Obj.* I my ſelf am but poor, and can do but little for them.

*A.* Though thy kindneſs be never ſo ſmall, as ſmall as a *cup of water*, and that *cold*, taken out of the River, without any pains or coſt to heat it, yea but *ONE* cup full thereof, and no more, (ſuppoſing that to be the moſt thou canſt do for them) yet it ſhall be rewarded by him, who more reſpecteth the willingneſs of the Giver, than the greatneſs of the Gift.

The greateſt difficulty in the words is, who are here meant by *little ones*, for whoſe ſake the reward is promiſed.

By *little ones*, our Saviour meaneth no other than ſuch whom in the foregoing verſe he had ſtiled *Prophets*, and *Righteous Ones*.

They are called *Little Ones* in two reſpects.

1. *In regard of the Worlds eſteem of them.*

2. *In regard of their own account of themſelues.*

Firſt, *They are little in the worlds eye.* The world which judgeth not according to inward worth, hath them in low eſteem: It fares with the Servants, as it fared with their Maſter, they are deſpiſed and rejected, and trodden under foot of men. Of old they were accounted *Deſolate*, and *forſaken*, *Iſa.* 62. 4. In the Apoſtles time, the *filth of the world*, the *off-ſcouring of all things*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 13. Experience of all Ages verifieth as much: And among other Ages, ours giveth not the leaſt Evidence to it.

That comfort and contentment which Gods people find in the Lord, and the light of his Countenance, yea that hope they have of finding grace in his eyes, make them the leſs to mind, and ſeek after the honour, wealth, and promotions of the world, and commonly they have but little of it. Now the world judgeth according to outward, earthly, worldly glory, it diſcerneth not the ſpiritual glory of the Saints, 1 *Joh.* 3. 1.

Judge not of men according to the worlds judgment: think not ever the more meanly of Saints, becauſe the

world thinks ſo of them. They are highly favoured of the Moſt High: they are ſuch *of whom the world is not worthy*; they are *the excellent ones*, Pſal. 16. 3. But what ever they be in deed, in the eye of the world they are but *little ones*.

Secondly, *They are little in their own eyes*, Gen. 18.27. We read how *Abraham* in ſpeaking to God, ſtiles himſelf no better than *Duſt and Aſhes*, Gen. 32. 10. *Jacob* acknowledgeth himſelf *unworthy*, or, *leſs than the leaſt of Gods Mercies*.

The ground thereof may be, becauſe the Saints beſt know themſelves, ſince they more thorowly, than other men, ſearch their hearts, and obſerve their ways, and compare themſelves with the pure and perfect Law of God, and take notice of their inward ſecret corruptions, as well as of their outward and viſible tranſgreſſions: And thus come they to know more of themſelves, than any other can, or may ſuſpect of them: And this clearer ſight of themſelves brings them down, and lays them low. This made Saint *Paul* to cry out, Rom. 7.24. *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the Body of this Death?* This is a note of true Grace, and of a ſanctified heart. They are the *Poor in ſpirit*, not the Proud in ſpirit, that are Chriſts Bleſſed Ones, *Matth.* 5. 3. The Falſe Diſciple thinketh highly of himſelf, and would be accounted not ὁ μικρὸς a *little one*, like a true Diſciple of Chriſt; but μεγας τις. *ſome great one*, like to *Simon Magus*, *Act.* 8. 8, 9. This Spirit is a Satanical Spirit. Try the Spirit by this note, whether it be of God, or no.

But though all the Servants of God are on the forementioned account *little ones*, yet there are ſome among them leſs than others, *as in regard of their Offices* and ſtations in the Church, ſome are in higher, others in lower Offices; ſome are in Office, others not: So alſo *in regard of their Parts, and Gifts*, and Graces; ſome are ſtrong, and others are weak; ſome the chief, others the leaſt of Saints; ſome as the head, and others but as the finger, or the foot: and 'tis probable the Text hath the moſt ſpecial reſpect (and the Emphaſis of it is the greater) to the leaſt of all theſe *little ones*;

and

and ſo the expreſſion is, *Matth.* 25. 40. In as much as ye have done it unto one *of the leaſt* of theſe, my Brethren, ye have done it unto me.

This I the rather take notice of, to give an hint to Chriſtians in their Charitable Diſtributions, to have an eye to ſuch Miniſters, or Chriſtians, as are more obſcure, and leſs conſiderable in the World. Poſſibly when thoſe of greater worth and remark may taſte deeply of their Bounty, every one almoſt hath a kindneſs for them: in the mean time there may be ſome poor hidden ones, whoſe worth is leſs, but their wants are greater, who being low in thoſe gifts or graces which would commend them to the more publick notice, are almoſt buried in forgetfulneſs. It's true, that by how much the more Eminent the perſon is that is relieved, *(cæteris paribus)* by ſo much the more excellent the work; yet ſpecial care ſhould be taken, that the more obſcure and leaſt deſerving among all that belong to God, be not forgotten.

The words thus explained, afford unto us two ſpecial points of Doctrine.

1. Doct. *God taketh notice of every of his Saints, even of the leaſt of them, and of kindneſs ſhewed to them.*

Though *Joſeph* was but a Lad, and ſold as a Slave, yet being one of the Church, one of the little ones, yea *minimorum minimus*; yet in *Ægypt* God takes notice of him, and of that kindneſs which was ſhewed to him, *Gen.* 32. 5. Many other like examples are noted in the Scripture; but none more fit for our purpoſe, than the example of *Lazarus*, *Luk.* 16. 20. Though he were a very poor Beggar, and full of ſores, and deſpiſed of *Dives*, and all his Houſhold, yet God took ſuch notice of him, as he made his Angels attend him: Yea, God took notice of the kindneſs which the Dogs ſhewed him, for their licking of his ſores is recorded to all Ages. Note thoſe expreſſions of the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. 40. 12. *But I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me.* And again, Pſal. 34. 6. *This poor man cryed, and the Lord heard him, and ſaved him out of all his troubles.*

Qu. If you ask, why the Lord taketh notice of every of his Saints?

Anſ. 1. *They are all his Children, and of his Houſhold*; therefore as a tender and careful Father and Maſter, he careth for every one: Yea, they are all Members of the Body of Chriſt. Now the Head taketh care of every Member, even the leaſt, and taketh notice of every kindneſs done to any of them.

2. *They are all by reaſon of grace in them, as Jewels* and *precious ſtones*; therefore as a provident *Jeweller*, he will look to every one of them. Yea, that which often appeareth leaſt, may be of greater worth; as a little *Diamond* is of more value than a far greater Pebble.

This affordeth a ſingular ground of comfort to ſuch as in this world are deſolate, and forſaken: though they be left alone (as *Elijah* was, 1 *King.* 19. 10.) And *as a Pelican in the Wilderneſs*, or *an Owl of the Deſert*, or *as a Sparrow alone upon the houſe top*, as the Pſalmiſt expreſſeth, *Pſal.* 102. 6, 7. yet is the Lord with them, and takes care of them. Now if the Lord be with us, and taketh care of us, what need we fear? ] How ſhould this incourage us to extend our Charity to any one of the Saints, and Members of Chriſt, though mean and little in the world, and not able to recompence us: and though none take notice thereof, to conſider that the Lord taketh notice, and will abundantly recompence every good work, yea the leaſt kindneſs we do unto them. Heb. 6. 10. *God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and labour of love which ye have ſhewed towards his Name, in that ye have miniſtred to the Saints, and do miniſter.* Where *Gods not forgetting their labour of love in miniſtring to the Saints*, doth imply, that as God taketh notice of their beneficence; ſo he is, and will be ever mindful of ſuch and ſuch perſons to ſupport and ſuccour, and every way to do them good.

And if God will thus remember thoſe that remember the leaſt of his, how will he take it that they are neglected? Beloved, how is it with Gods little ones at this day? Is it not very low with many of them? God takes notice how very low it is; and whether you will or no, God will not forſake them; but (that I may uſe the words of *Mordecai* to *Eſther*, with ſome variation,

*Eſther*

*Eſther* 4. 14.) if you altogether hold your hand at this time, relief ſhall ariſe to them ſome other way, but you and your houſe (take heed that word be not verified upon you) ſhall be deſtroyed. But who knows whether you are come to your Eſtates for ſuch a time as this!

And thus I come to the ſecond and main point of *Doctrine*, which riſeth from the *Reward promiſed* to ſuch as ſhew the leaſt kindneſs to a *Miniſter*, or *Righteous Man*, though it be but *a cup of cold water*, *they ſhall in no wiſe loſe their reward.* Whence we may obſerve.

2. Doct. *That the leaſt work of Charity ſhewed to a Miniſter, or Righteous man, ſhall be abundantly recompenced; and that not only hereafter, but likewiſe here on Earth.*

Though our beneficence ought to extend unto all who are in want, and come within the verge of our knowledge, and power; as Gal. 6. 10. *According as we have opportunity, let us do good unto ALL men*; yet I confine my diſcourſe here to *Miniſters*, and *Righteous ones*, becauſe they only are implied under thoſe *little ones* mentioned in my Text.

That merciful men ſhall be abundantly recompenced hereafter in heaven for their works of Charity, there is no doubt, being ſo clearly expreſſed in the Word of God, Luk. 16. 9. *Make your ſelves friends of the Mammon of unrighteouſneſs, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlaſting habitations.* And 1 Tim. 6. 17. *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate, laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation* againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold of Eternal Life.

But the great queſtion is concerning *temporal reward*, *Whether Chriſtian Charity, rightly performed, ſhall be recompenced here in this life with temporal bleſſings*: So that what men give in a way of Charity, there is ground to expect, it ſhall be here returned into their boſomes again with increaſe.

I deny not but a Charitable man may become poor, and be reduced into ſome ſtreights, through Suretiſhip, negli-

negligence in his Calling, or in reſpect of ſome ſecret ſin wherein he liveth, which may juſtly bring a temporal curſe upon him: So that his liberality, in ſuch caſes, may not be a ſufficient fence againſt want and penury: But this I ſay, *That as penuriouſneſs towards the Poor is the readieſt way to poverty; ſo Chriſtian Charity, rightly performed, is the ſureſt way to plenty and abundance*; it being uſually rewarded with *Temporal* bleſſings here, as well as with *Eternal* hereafter. Where is the man to be found, that is the poorer by what he hath given to the Poor? How many are the inſtances of ſuch which have met with ſome *ſignal bleſſings* from God in this life, as the reward of their liberality?

This may ſeem a *Paradox* to many uncharitable men, that *giving ſhould be the ſureſt way of getting*; and that *the more liberal any man is, the more likely he is to thrive and proſper in the world.* Yet nothing is more clearly laid down in the Scripture, and found to be true by the experience of multitudes of Gods people in all Ages. *And I am verily perſwaded, that there is ſeldom any man that maketh Conſcience of this Duty, who giveth out to the Poor proportionably to what God hath beſtowed on him, and with an honeſt upright heart; but if he do obſerve the paſſages of Gods Providence towards him, he ſhall find the ſame doubled, and redoubled upon him in temporal bleſſings.* I dare challenge all the world to give one inſtance, or at leaſt any conſiderable number of inſtances, of any truly merciful men, whoſe Charity hath undone them. But as *living Wells*, the more they are drawn, the more freely they ſpring and flow; ſo the ſubſtance of Charitable men doth oftentimes, if not ordinarily, multiply in the very diſtribution; even as the five Loaves, and few Fiſhes, did multiply in their breaking and diſtributing; and the Widdows Oyl increaſed by the pouring it out.

But theſe bare Aſſertions being no full Convictions: For the better clearing the truth of this Doctrine, I ſhall prove it by *Scriptures*, *Examples*, and *Reaſons*.

1. For *Scripture proofs*, there are very many both in the Old and New Teſtament. What the Apoſtle ſaith of *Godlineſs*, 1 Tim. 4. 8. *It is profitable unto all things,*

*things, having the promiſe of this life, and of that which is to come*: The like I may ſay of *Charity*, It is profitable unto all things, having promiſes of *Temporal bleſſings*, as well as of *Spiritual*, and *Eternal*.

Deut. 15. 10. *Thou ſhalt ſurely give unto thy Brother, and thy heart ſhall not be grieved when thou giveſt unto him; becauſe that for this the Lord thy God ſhall bleſs thee in all thy works, and in all that thou putteſt thine hand unto.* It is not thine own labour or care, but the Divine Bleſſing that maketh rich; and of that bleſſing, behold here's a *Scripture-entail* upon the liberal. And the like we have, Pro. 3. 9, 10. *Honour the Lord with thy ſubſtance*, by giving out a portion thereof for the relief of the poor, *ſo ſhall thy Barns be filled with plenty*; and as thy *Barns*, ſo thy *Shop*, thy *Cellars*, *Warehouſes*, where thou beſtoweſt thy goods, ſhall be filled with abundance; *and thy Preſſes ſhall burſt out with new Wine.* This ſeemeth to be an hyperbolical expreſſion, yet it ſignifieth no leſs than this, *that Gods uſual way is to make good Returns of all we lay out upon him, and his*; and that our wiſeſt way, both for inſuring and improving what we have, is to make our ſelves Creditors to his wanting Saints.

A compaſſionate heart, and an helping hand, will gather by expending; ſuch *giving* is *getting*, ſuch bounty is the moſt compendious way to plenty. Whereupon the Wiſe man addeth, Pro. 11. 24. *There is that ſcattereth, and yet increaſeth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.* Who is he here that ſcattereth? not he that waſts his Eſtate upon his throat, his back, and his belly, or with the *Prodigal* upon *Harlots*; but he *that caſteth his bread upon the waters*, as the expreſſion is, Eccl. 11. 1. *He that diſperſeth and giveth to the Poor*; as *Pſal.* 112. 9. This is the ſcatterer in that Text. And what of him? is he waſted? is he impoveriſhed? Behold the quite contrary: the man is grown rich, *he is increaſed by ſcattering.* Let him look to it that withholdeth more than is meet: this is the more likely man of the two to be found ſhortly on the dunghil. If thou wilt ſecure thy ſelf from beggery, keep not Gods Beggars from the door,

nor

nor ſend them away empty, whoſe needs, though not their tongues, cry in thine ears, *Give for the Lords ſake*. Fear not to loſe by laying out: Thy *laying up* what thou ſhouldſt *lay out*, hath the moſt danger in it. The Divine Curſe may wither that in thine hand which thou holdeſt faſt againſt the Divine Command.

In the following verſe we read farther, *The liberal ſoul ſhall be made fat*. The *Soul* is often in Scripture taken to ſignifie the *Man*; and ſo it is here, and is the ſame as the *liberal man*. *To be made fat*, ſignifies to *proſper*, to be *full*, and *abound*, or *to grow rich in this worlds goods:* And thus it ſhall be, if this Scripture may be credited.

The *liberal Soul*] It is in the *Hebrew*, as you may find it noted in the Margin, *the Soul of bleſſing*; the merciful man is a bleſſing, and hath a bleſſing for ſuch as need him: and he that is a bleſſing, ſhall be bleſſed; the Lord God ſhall bleſs him with an increaſe of his ſubſtance, who hath moſt emptied himſelf for him, and his. It's true, that the SOUL of the liberal, properly taken, ſhall be a gainer by his liberality: no more *thriving Chriſtians*, than the *merciful Chriſtians*; what they expend in temporals, is abundantly returned in ſpirituals. But becauſe there is ſo much of *Carnal*, even in too many Chriſtians, and we have need of incouragements ſuited to our tempers; therefore to our ſpiritual advantages, which are the greateſt, theſe outward incouragements are added as often moſt taking with our too carnal hearts. So that this is the ſenſe of the place: The liberal man, as the reward and incouragement of his liberality, ſhall proſper in the world. And as it follows, *He that watereth* the ſoul of the needy, his waters ſhall not fail, but he *ſhall be watered alſo himſelf*. God will give in to him, according as he hath given out to others.

And for their farther incouragement, ſaith the Wiſe man, Pro. 19. 17. *He that hath pity on the Poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given, ſhall he pay him again*. If that which thou giveſt be repaid thee again, how can it be ſaid to be loſt? Indeed the Poor unto whom thou giveſt, are not able to repay thee

thee again, yet having ſuch an All-ſufficient Surety as God himſelf, who hath undertaken the repayment, thou need'ſt not doubt thereof. Oh happy is that man that becomes a Creditor to his Creator, and makes God his Debtor! whoſe is the Earth, and the fulneſs thereof. Heaven and Earth ſhall be emptied, before he ſhall want a Royal Payment.

Fear not to be an Uſurer; ſo thou lendeſt unto God, make him thy Debtor, and he will ſurely pay thee Principal and Intereſt. Allow him his time (for that he will have) and he will not only pay the Debt, but allow thee for the forbearance. The ungodly borroweth, and payeth not again: but this ſhall never be ſaid of the Righteous God; he is Juſt, and will make good payment of whatſoever is lent unto him.

It is true, the Lord loves to deal *upon Truſt*, and uſes to make payment by way of *Returns*. He will be truſted, and thoſe that will not give him Credit, let them, if they can, put their Eſtates into ſurer hands. And he uſes to pay by the way of *Returns*, it may be neither in the ſame kind, nor in the ſame Country. Sometimes 'tis ſo that he pays not in the ſame kind, Bread for Bread, or Cloaths for Cloaths, or Money for Money; nor poſſibly may he make his payment in this Forreign Land where thou art a Merchant adventurer, but may give thee his Bill of Exchange to receive it in thine own Country, that better Country, which is thy Home, and Inheritance; which ſhall be the reward of thy works, and labour of love, which thou ſheweſt to his Name. And if he do thus, does he thee any wrong? Is it not beſt for thee that thou receive thy goods at thy home? Is it any harm to thee to receive Silver for thy Braſs, Gold for thy Silver, Rubies for thy Gold, a Treaſure in Heaven for thy Treaſure on Earth? Doubt not that he will be behind hand with thee; yet ſtick not, if thou ſhouldſt be put to it, to wait for payment in full till hereafter: and for the preſent this thou mayſt depend upon, from Pro. 28. 17. *He that giveth to the Poor ſhall not lack*, he ſhall have in hand what's needful at leaſt. *He ſhall not lack*; and there may be more in this word, than if he

he had ſaid, I will preſently pay thee all: For all that thou haſt, if thou ſhouldſt hold it never ſo cloſe, cannot ſecure thee from ever coming to want; as great as thy abundance is, thou mayſt come to want before thou dieſt. But what thy abundance cannot do, this promiſe of God can and doth for thee, even give thee ſecurity that thou ſhalt never lack.

Again, Eccl. 11. 1. *Caſt thy bread upon the waters, for thou ſhalt find it after many days.* By *Bread*, is here meant all things neceſſary for the ſupport of mens lives. And by *caſting* their bread upon the waters, is meant their giving freely of that which they have for the relief of the poor, whoſe wa'ry eyes bewray their great neceſſity. And though that which thou beſtoweſt on them, may ſeem to be as clearly loſt and caſt away, as that which is thrown down the River, or caſt into the Sea, where there is no likelihood of receiving it again, becauſe given to thoſe who can no way recompence thee; whence aroſe that *Greek* Proverb, *εἰς ὕπως σπείρεις, Thou ſoweſt upon the water*; which is uſually applyed to ſuch as beſtow kindneſſes where they are utterly loſt.

*Yet thou ſhalt find it after many days*; *Lavater in locum* ſaith, that here is implied a promiſe of long life to the charitable, that God will lengthen out his days to a good old age. Though this falls out true in many, yet I conceive it not to be here intended, nor to be the meaning of the words, but rather this; that though thy reward doth not preſently appear, yet if thou beſtoweſt thine Alms with a ſincere heart, it ſhall not be loſt, but certainly be returned into thy boſom with increaſe.

Yet further ſaith the Lord by the Prophet, *Iſa.* 58. 7, 8. &c. *If thou deal thy Bread to the hungry, and bring the Poor that are caſt out to thy Houſe; and when thou ſeeſt the naked, if thou cover him, and that thou hide not thy ſelf from thine own fleſh*, by turning thy face from him; *then* (ſee what a gracious promiſe of ſignal bleſſings follow hereupon) *ſhall thy light break forth as the Morning*; that is, then ſhall the night of thine adverſity be diſpelled, and the day-ſpring of thy proſperity break

break forth as the Morning light, *and thy Righteouſneſs ſhall go before thee*; that is, the fruit and reward of thy Charity ſhall be viſible to all: *the Glory of the Lord ſhall be thy Rereward*; that is, the God of Glory ſhall by his Power and Providence both go before thee, and follow thee with his bleſſing. And verſe 10. *If thou draw out thy ſoul to the hungry, and ſatisfie the afflicted ſoul*; that is, afford that hearty relief unto him which ſhall ſatisfie neceſſity, *then ſhall thy light riſe in obſcurity*, thy adverſity ſhall be turned into proſperity, and *the Lord ſhall guide thee continually, and ſatisfie thy ſoul in drought*, as thou didſt ſatisfie the poor mans Soul by ſupplying his wants, ſo the Lord will ſupply thee with a ſufficiency in the greateſt Dearth and Famine; *and make fat thy bones*; *and thou ſhalt be as a watered Garden, and like a ſpring of water, whoſe waters fail not*; an Emblem of a flouriſhing and proſperous eſtate, which doth uſually follow and accompany merciful men.

Yea our bleſſed Saviour, *Matth.* 19. 29. promiſeth, that ſuch as for his ſake ſhall this or any other way part with their Eſtates, or any part or portion of them, *ſhall receive an hundred fold here, and inherit Eternal Life hereafter*: Here in this life he ſhall have the return of an hundred fold, which many Chriſtians have found true in their own experience, and with thankfulneſs to God have acknowledged as much.

And what variety of expreſſions doth our Saviour uſe in *Luke* 6. 38. to aſſure us of a large reward here of all our labour of love ſhewed to his Miniſters and Members? *Give*, ſaith he, *and it ſhall be given to you again good meaſure, preſſed down, and ſhaken together, and running over.* For your incouragement unto this duty of giving to the Poor, our Saviour firſt annexeth a general promiſe of return; *Give, and it ſhall be given to you again*; where he giveth you a *Bill of his hand*, that you ſhall be no loſers by what you give to his Poor, but ſhall be repaid, and that with advantage, as the following words declare; *You ſhall have good meaſure, preſſed down, ſhaken together, and running over.* We account it good meaſure when it is

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*heaped up:* but when it is not only heaped up, but *preſſed down*, that is more: but when it is heaped up, preſſed down, and *running over again*, who can but ſay, that this is good meaſure indeed? Yet thus God deals with merciful men, they ſhall have mercies and bleſſings *heaped up, preſſed down, and running over.* How truly then may I take up the words of the Pſalmiſt; *Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the Poor*; he ſhall not only be bleſſed, but he ſhall have bleſſings *heaped up, and running over*; which the Apoſtle S. *Paul* expreſſeth very Emphatically, by the Similitude of *Reaping* and *Sowing*, 2 Cor. 9. 6. *He that ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap ſparingly; but he which ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap bountifully.* As men ſow, ſo ſhall they reap; the more liberally they give to good uſes, the more bountifully they ſhall receive from God: they ſhall find a plentiful Harveſt, as the fruit of all their coſt and pains. Dr. *Hammond* in his Practical Catechiſm, quoting theſe words of the Apoſtle, *He that ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap bountifully*, addeth this Gloſs; 'By *reaping bountifully*, I conceive is meant, '*not only Gods abundant Retributions of Glory in another* '*World, but even his payments of temporal plenty, and* '*bleſſings here, to thoſe who have been willing to make that* '*Chriſtian uſe of that Earthly Talent committed to their* '*Stewarding.*

Thus you ſee there are ſo many promiſes both in the Old and New Teſtament of *temporal*, as well as of ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings to the merciful, that there can be no queſtion made of the truth of the Doctrine. And to uſe the expreſſion of the forementioned Doctor: *By all thoſe teſtimonies from the Word of God, both in the New and Old Teſtament, I conceive this Doctrine as clear as any in the Scripture*; '*That the pro-* '*miſe of temporal plenty to the liberal is ſo diſtinct and in-* '*fallible, that it can be no leſs than* 1. *A very groſs ignorance of plain Scripture not to obſerve it*; *and* 2. *An act of arrant Infidelity, not to believe it.*

Though theſe proofs of Scripture are ſufficient to convince any Chriſtian of the truth of the Doctrine, yet

yet for your further ſatisfaction, I ſhall briefly give you the Judgment both of ſome ancient Fathers, and modern Divines concerning the ſame.

*Non qui habet & Servat, ſed qui impertit eſt Dives, & impertitio, non autem poſſeſſio divites facit. Clemens Alexand.* Pædag. lib. 3. Not he that poſſeſſeth wealth, and keeps it by him, but he that diſtributeth it, is rich: neither is it the having, but the laying out of riches, that makes men rich.

*Terrena omnia Servando amittimus, largiendo Servamus, Iſiodorus.* We loſe all earthly things by keeping them, and by giving them away we keep them.

*Lucrum eſt egenis dare,* ſaith St. Baſil. Its the beſt way of thriving to give to them that are in want.

*Fœcundus eſt ager pauperum, cito reddit donantibus fructum, Aug. Serm. de Divite.* The field of the poor is very fruitful, and quickly yieldeth an increaſe to the charitable.

The ſame Father in his 25 Sermon *de verbis Domini*, brings in Chriſt ſpeaking thus, *Da mihi ex eo quod dedi tibi, habuiſti me largitorem, fac me debitorem* &c. Give to me of that which I have given to thee; I have been thy benefactor, make me thy debtor, become an Vſurer to me, and I will pay thee with advantage. And in one of his Epiſtles, *Da modicum ut recipias centuplum.* Give a little, and thou ſhalt receive a hundred fold.

*Da pauperi ut detur tibi, quicquid pauperi dederis tu habebis, quod non dederis, habebit alter.* Give to the poor, and it ſhall be given to thee. Whatſoever thou giveſt to the poor, thou ſecureſt to thy ſelf: what thou withholdeſt, another ſhall poſſeſs. *Pet. Raven Serm. quodam.*

*Deus bis ſolvit hoc fœnus, ſcilicet ſemel in terra, Secundo in cœlo. In terra enim eleemoſynariis multiplicat opes, in cœlo autem longe plura, & majora rependit.* God twice pays what's lent to him, once in this world, by multiplying the wealth of Alms-givers; and then in heaven he pays it over and over. *Cornelius a Lapid. in Pro.* 19. 17.

Dr. *Hammond* in his Sermon on *Deut.* 26. 12, 13. layeth down this Propoſition. "That alms giving, or mer-

'*mercifullness* was never the *wasting* or *lessening* of any 'mans estate, to *himself* or his *posterity*, but rather the 'encreasing of it. And thereupon addeth, If I have 'delivered a *new Doctrine*, which will not presently be 'believed, Such as every Auditour will not consent to, 'I doubt not but there be plain texts of Scripture, 'more than one, which will assure every Christian of 'the truth of it. Consider them at your leisure, *Psal.* '41. 1, 2. *Psal.* 112. all to this purpose. *Pro.* 11. 25. '& 12. 9. & 19. 17. & 28. 27. Add to these the words 'of Christ. *Mark* 10. 30. which though more *generally* 'delivered of any kind of parting with possessions for '*Christs sake*, are applyed by St. *Hierom*, to the words 'of *Solomon*. Pro. 11. 24. *There is that scattereth, and yet* 'increaseth, *quia centuplum accipiunt in hoc tempore*, 'because, saith he, they receive an hundred fold in this 'world.

'All these being put together, must, saith he, (to my 'understanding) make it as clear to any that acknow-'ledge these for Scripture, as if God should call to a 'man out of heaven by name. and bid him *releive that* 'poor man, *and he should never be the poorer for it* &c.

Afterwards in pressing upon his Auditors the duty of Alms-giving, 'This, saith he, *I am resolved on*, tis 'want of belief, and nothing else, that keeps men from 'the practice of this duty. Could this one Mountain 'be removed, *the lessening of our wealth*; that alms giving 'is accused of; could that one Scandal to flesh and blood 'be picked out of the way, there is no other Devil 'would take the unmerciful mans part, no other 'temptation molest the alms-giver.

'And let me tell you, that you have no more evi-'dence for *the truth of Christs coming*, for *all the* 'fundamentals of your faith, on which you are content 'your Salvation should depend, than such as I have 'given you for your Security in this point.

Dr. *Jeremy Taylor* in his *Rules of holy-living*, treating of Alms, *Sect.* 8. among other *Motives* thereunto, hath this. 'That portion of our estate, out of which a 'tenth or a fifth, or a twentieth, or some offering to 'God for Religion, and the poor, goes forth, certainly returns

returns with a great bleſſing upon all the reſt. It is like the effuſion of oyl by the *Sydonian woman*, as long as ſhe poures into empty veſſels, it could never ceaſe running: Or like the *widdows barrel of meal*, it conſumes not as long as ſhe fed the Prophet.

Mr. *Hilderſham* in his 22th. Lecture on Pſal. 51. ſpeaking of *alms-giving*, ſaith. *It is a Duty that God hath made greater promiſes unto, than to any other almoſt that a Chriſtian can perform.* And three ſorts of promiſes there be that are made unto it. Firſt, *That it ſhall never hinder, nor begger a man; That that is thus given ſhall not be loſt*, yea, it will return again with advantage and increaſe: Yea, that that is thus given will bring Gods bleſſing upon all that we have beſides, Deut. 15. 10.

Dr. *Thomas Jacomb*, in his Sermon on *Matth.* 5. 7. preached at the Spittle 1657. ſaith, God will return to the Merciful man what he gives to the poor, he will reward him *in kind*; that look whatever it is that he beſtows, it ſhall be *in the very kind* made up to him again; many have found this to be true: in the Morning they have given, it may be, five ſhillings, and before night God hath brought them in unexpectedly twenty for it. *The beſt way for a man to encreaſe his eſtate is charity*: Money here like the widdows oyl, the more tis *poured out*, the more it doth *increaſe*, &c. And p. 26. No man ſhall be the poorer at the years end for what he lays out upon the poor; you ſhall have your money again, and improvment for it too.

The Author of the *whole Duty of man*, treating of Alms in Partition 17. ſaith, 'There is but one Objection 'to be made againſt a cheerful giving of Alms, and 'that is *The danger of impoveriſhing ones ſelf by what one 'gives*. To which he anſwers in theſe words; that this 'is ſure a vain ſuppoſition, God having particularly 'promiſed the contrary to the charitable: *That it ſhall 'bring bleſſings on them, even in theſe outward things. The 'liberal ſoul ſhall be made fat, & he that watereth, ſhall be 'watered alſo himſelf*, Pro. 11. 25. *He that giveth to the 'poor, ſhall not lack*, Pro. 28. 27. And many the like 'texts there are, ſo that one may truly ſay, This Ob-'jection is grounded in direct unbelief. The ſhort of it

'is, we dare not truſt God; for this giving to the 'poor, is directly the putting our wealth into 'his hands: *He that giveth to the Poor, lendeth un-* '*to the Lord*, Prov. 19. 17. and that too on ſolemn 'promiſe of repayment; as it follows in that verſe, '*That which he hath given, will he pay him again.* 'It is amongſt men thought a great diſparagement, 'when we refuſe to truſt them: it ſhews, we either 'think them not ſufficient, or not honeſt: How vile an 'affront is it then to God, thus to diſtruſt him? Nay 'indeed, how horrid blaſphemy, to doubt the ſecurity 'of that for which he has thus expreſly paſt his word, 'who is the Lord of all, and therefore cannot be inſuf- 'ficient; and who is the God of Truth, and therefore 'will not fail to make good his promiſe? Let not then 'that Infidel fear of future want contract and ſhut up 'thy Bowels from thy poor Brother; for though he be 'never like to pay, yet God becomes his Surety, and 'enters Bond with him, and will moſt aſſuredly pay thee 'with increaſe.

'Therefore it is ſo far from being damage to thee 'thus to give, that it is *thy great advantage*. Any man 'would rather chuſe to put his Money in ſome ſure 'hand, where he may both improve, and be certain of 'it at his need, than to let it lie unprofitable by him, e- 'ſpecially if he be in danger of Thieves, or other acci- 'dents, by which he may probably loſe it. Now alas! 'all that we poſſeſs is in imminent danger of loſing; in- 'numerable accidents there are, which may in an in- 'ſtant bring a rich man to beggery: He that doubts this, 'let him but read the ſtory of *Job*, and he will there 'find an example of it. And therefore what ſo pru- 'dent courſe can we take for our wealth, as to put it 'out of the reach of thoſe accidents, by thus lending to 'God, where we may be ſure to find it ready at our 'greateſt need, and that too with improvement and in- 'creaſe? In which reſpect it is, that the Apoſtle com- 'pares Alms to Seed, 2 *Cor.* 9. 10. We know it is the 'nature of Seed that is ſown, to multiply and increaſe; 'and ſo do all our acts of Mercy, they return not ſingle 'and naked to us, but bring in their ſheaves with them,

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'a moſt plenteous and bountiful Harveſt. God deals 'not with our Alms, as we too often do with his Gra-'ces, wrap them up in a Napkin, ſo that they ſhall ne-'ver bring in any advantage to us, but makes us moſt 'rich Returns: And therefore we have all reaſon moſt 'chearfully, yea joyfully, to ſet to this Duty, which we 'have ſuch invitations to, as well in reſpect of our own '*Intereſt*, as our Neighbours needs.

Thus have you the truth of the point proved, both by Divine and Humane Teſtimonies. I ſhould now proceed to give you ſome inſtances for the farther confirmation thereof: But I muſt beſeech you firſt to take theſe two *Cautions.*

1. *Not to aſcribe the Reward to any Merit of your good works, but only to the free Grace, and rich mercy of God.* It is his rich Mercy that we have wherewithal to give, and his free Grace that we have an heart to give, and his abundant goodneſs that he accepteth our Works of Charity, and rewardeth them with all ſorts of bleſſings, both Temporal, Spiritual, and Eternal: But we cannot merit any thing at his hand, by giving him that which is his own.

2. *Though our Alms-deeds are ſacrifices acceptable and well-pleaſing unto God through Chriſt*; and though he hath bound himſelf by many gracious promiſes to reward the ſame both here, and hereafter; yet far be it from us to perform them meerly out of hope of reward, but rather for *Conſcience ſake*; *in obedience to the Command of God*, (who hath required them at our hands) and *in teſtimony of our thankfulneſs unto him*, for what he hath graciouſly beſtowed on us. As we are commanded to obey the Magiſtrate, not ſo much for *fear of puniſhment*, and *hope of reward*, as for *Conſcience ſake*, in obedience to the Command of God, *Rom.* 13. 5. ſo ought we to diſtribute our Alms, not ſo much for the reward ſake, as out of Conſcience for the Lords ſake.

I deny not but Chriſtians in their well-doing, may for their incouragement have reſpect to the recompence of reward, but not *only*, and *chiefly*. The chief and principal Ends we ſhould aim at in all our good works, are *the glory of God*, and *obedience to his Command*. Our re-

ſpect to the recompence of reward, ought to be ſubordinate unto theſe. The truth is, this Temporal reward ſhould not ſo much be looked on, as an *Argument* to perſwade us to give, but as an Anſwer of an Objection againſt giving. Thou wilt be ready to ſay, I may want it my ſelf, or mine may want it: But do but believe that God will repay thee, and with *overplus*; and then that doubt will be taken out of the way.

Theſe two Cautions premiſed, I ſhall proceed in the confirmation of the point from the examples of many charitable perſons, who have in temporal mercies been abundantly recompenced for the kindneſs they have ſhewed to the Miniſters and Members of Chriſt.

The Widdow of *Sareptah* nouriſhed the Prophet *Elijah* in her houſe, during the whole time of Famine: and how did the Lord abundantly recompence this her Charity, by his miraculous preſerving and increaſing her Meal and Oyl, whereby her Family was nouriſhed. As alſo by reſtoring her Son to life again, after his Soul was departed? 1 *King.* 17. 22. And by cauſing the *Prophet* to continue with her many Months, to feed her Soul with ſpiritual, as ſhe had his Body with corporal food.

How abundantly was the *Shunamite*'s kindneſs to the Prophet *Eliſha* recompenced?

1. *By the gift of a Son after long barrenneſs.*

2. *By reſtoring her Son to life again when he was dead,* 2 King. 16.

3. *By forewarning her of a Famine approaching,* 2 King. 8. 1, 4.

4. *By the reſtoring of her Houſe and Land, loſt in her long abſence, by reaſon of the Famine,* 2 King. 4. 28.

Notable is the inſtance of *Job*. What a merciful man he was, we may read Chap. 29. 12, 13, 15. *I delivered the Poor that cryed, and the Fatherleſs, and him that had none to help him. The bleſſing of him that was ready to periſh came upon me, and I cauſed the Widdows heart to ſing for joy. I was eyes to the blind, and feet I was to the lame; I was a Father to the Poor.* And Chap. 31. 16. & 22. *If I have withheld the Poor from their deſire, or have cauſed the eyes of the Widdow to fail, or have eaten my morſel*

*morsel alone, and the Fatherless hath not eaten thereof: If I have seen any perish for want of cloathing, or any Poor without covering; If his loyns have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep, Then let mine arms fall from my shoulder-blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone.* I have transcribed his own words thus at large, that I might set this worthy pattern before the Readers eyes.

But you will say, what became of this merciful man? did he prosper? did he flourish, and grow great? who so poor as poor *Job* after all these acts of mercy? How long after was it, that we find this *merciful man* a *miserable man*, strip'd naked of all that ever he had? But first, it was not his *own mercy*, but *Satans malice* that brought him down: It was the *Devil* that set the *Sabeans* and *Chaldeans* upon him, to plunder and carry away all that he had. And *secondly*, what became of *Job* afterwards, after *Satan* had done his worst? You may read, Chap. 42. 10. &c. *That the Lord turned the Captivity of* Job, *and gave him twice so much as he had before, and blessed his latter end more than his beginning, for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand Camels: a thousand yoke of Oxen, and a thousand She-asses*: He had *also seven Sons, and three Daughters.*

*Act.* 28. 7. We read how *Publius*, the chief man of the Island of *Melita* (into which S. *Paul*, and many others with him were cast by Shipwrack) received and lodged them three days courteously: And in the next verse, we read how the Father of *Publius*, when he lay desperately sick of a Fever, and Bloody-flux, was recovered by S. *Paul*, and restored to his former health. So likewise the kindness which the barbarous people of that Island shewed unto *Paul*, and his Fellow-travellers, was recompenced with the cure of many of their sick bodies.

To these examples recorded in Scripture, I shall add a few more out of Ancient and Modern writings.

S. *Alban* (whom Mr. *Fox* in his first Tome mentioneth amongst the Martyrs who suffered for the Name and Cause of Christ) having received a poor persecuted Minister into his house, was by his godly life and

gracious exhortations so wrought upon, that he turned from *Heathenism* to *Christianity*, and at last suffered as a Martyr for the truth of Jesus Christ; as *Beda*, and others write of him. His kindness to a poor persecuted *Minister*, was recompenced not only with his Conversion to the true Religion, but likewise with the honour of Martyrdome.

S. *Austin* having set forth the mercifulness and liberality of *Constantine* the Great, saith, *Bonus Deus*, Constantinum *Magnum tantis terrenis implevit muneribus*, &c. God gave *Constantine*, that merciful Prince, more wealth than heart could wish, for his bounty to the Poor. *Aug. de Civitate Dei, l.* 5.

'Dr. *Hammond* in his forementioned Treatise mentioneth an ancient story out of *Cedrenus*, of a *Jew*, who 'upon reading those words of *Solomon*, Pro. 19. 17. *He 'that hath pity upon the Poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and 'that which he hath given, will he pay him again*; resolved to try, whether God would be as good as his 'word, thereupon gave all that he had but two pieces 'of silver to the Poor, and then waited and expected 'to see it come again: But being not presently answered in that expectation, grew angry, and went up to '*Jerusalem* to expostulate with God for not performing 'his promise. And going on his way, found two men a 'striving, ingaged in an unreasonable quarrel, about a 'Stone, that both walking together had found in the 'way, and so had both equal right to it; but (being but 'one, and not capable of being divided) they could not 'both enjoy: and therefore, to make them friends, he 'having two pieces of silver, doth upon contract divide 'them betwixt the Contenders, and hath the Stone in 'exchange for them. Having it, he goes on his journey, 'and coming to *Jerusalem*, shews it the Goldsmith, who 'tells him, that it was a Jewel of great value, being a 'Stone fallen, and lost out of the High-Priests *Ephod*, to 'whom if he carried it, he should certainly receive a 'great reward. He did so, and accordingly it proved. 'The High-Priest took it of him, gave him a great reward, and withal sharply reproved him for questioning 'the truth of Gods promises, bidding him trust God the 'next time.

The

The ſtory of *Tiberius the Second* is pertinent to this purpoſe, which take in the words of that Reverend perſon before mentioned in his Sermon at the *Spittle*. This *Tiberius* was very famous for his bounty to the Poor, inſomuch that his Wife was wont to blame him for it, and ſpeaking to him once, how he waſted his Treaſure that way; he told her, *He ſhould never want money, ſo long as in obedience to Chriſts Command he did ſupply the neceſſities of the Poor.* And preſently ſee how Providence ordered it! Immediately after he had given much this way, under a Marble Table which was taken up, he found a great Treaſure, and news was brought him too of the death of one *Narſes*, a very rich man, who had given his whole Eſtate unto him.

Famous is the ſtory of that charitable Biſhop of *Millain*, who as he was travelling with his Servant, overtook ſome poor people who begged an Alms of him: whereupon he aſked his man what Money he had about him, who anſwered, *Three Crowns*; which he commanded him to give unto them: but the Servant thinking himſelf wiſer than his Maſter, gave them but two Crowns, not knowing what occaſions they might have for Money before they got home. Not long after, ſome Noblemen meeting the Biſhop, and knowing him to be a very charitable man, appointed *two hundred Crowns* to be paid to the Biſhops Servant for his Maſters uſe. The Servant having received the Money, preſently with great joy acquainted his Maſter therewith; whereupon ſaid the Biſhop, Thou mayſt now ſee how in wronging the Poor of their due, by keeping back the third Crown which I intended them, thou haſt likewiſe wronged me; *Si enim tres dediſſe, trecentos accepiſſes*, &c. If thou hadſt given thoſe *three Crowns* I commanded thee to give, thou hadſt received *three hundred Crowns*, whereas now I have but *two*. *Melanc. apud Joh. Manlium in Loc. Com.*

It is recorded of *Mary* the Wife of *Alexander Ferneſe*, Prince of *Parma*, that being Childleſs, ſhe conceived an hope, that if ſhe would take into her houſe ſome *Orphan*, or poor mans Child, and there train him up, God would beſtow a Son upon her. Whereupon ſhe

she took a poor mans Son into her care, and gave order for his education; and according to her expectation, at nine Moneths end she was delivered of a Son.

Suitable likewise to this point is the story of one *John Stewart* Provost of *Aire* in *Scotland*, who was eminent for piety & charity. He had a considerable estate left him by his Father; of which he gave a great part to the poor and other charitable uses. To pass by many I shall mention only one. His heart on a time being much affected with the wants and necessities of many of Gods people, who were in a suffering condition, he sendeth for divers of them to *Edingburgh*, where being met, and some time spent in prayer, he made them promise not to reveal what he was about to do, so long as he lived: and then told them he was not ignorant in what a low condition many of them were, and therefore he had brought some money with him to lend each of them, yet so as they should never offer to repay it till he required the same; Soon after this, such a plague brake forth in *Air*, the place of his abode, that trade much decayed, and he himself with others were reduced to straits. Whereupon Some of the Prophane in that place derided him, saying, that Religion had made him poor, and his giving so much to others, like a fool, had brought him to want, But mark what followed. Having borrowed a little money, he departs from *Aire* to *Rochel* in *France*, where *Salt* and other commodities being exceeding cheap for want of trading, he adventured to fraught a ship, and loaded her upon Credit; and then went back again through *England* unto *Air* in *Scotland*, having ordered the ship to come thither. But after long expectation he was informed for certain, that his ship was taken by a Turkish man of war, the report whereof did exceedingly afflict him, not becaufe he knew not how to be abased, as well as as how to abound, but out of fear, that the mouths of wicked men would be the more opened to the reproaching of his profession and charity. But Soon after, tidings was brought him that his ship was safely arrived in the Road, and upon his going forth saw it was a truth. And through Gods good Providence, as a

reward

reward of his charity he made ſo much of the Commodities in the ſhip, that after the payment of his debts, he had twenty thouſand marks left for himſelf, Though his bread was caſt upon the waters, and to appearence loſt, yet after many days it rerurned to him with great advantage. This Story I lately read in a book, called, The fulfilling of the Scriptures,

*Daniel Waldow* Eſquire, *Citizen* and *Mercer*, who was choſen Alderman of *London*, is a further proof of this Doctrine before laid down. I could from mine own experience ſpeak much of his *bounty* and *charity*; as alſo of that *plentiful eſtate wherewith God bleſſed him therupon.* But I ſhall rather give it you in the words of that holy man, and bleſſed ſervant of Chriſt in the work of the Miniſtry, Mr. *James Nalton*, now with God, who was more intimately acquainted with Mr. *Waldow*, and therefore the more fit to preach his Funeral Sermon, and to ſet forth his life for our *Imitation.* His words are theſe, "He was a Man eminent, and 'exemplary in the grace of charity; as appeared by his 'great bounty manifeſted on every occaſion. Never 'any good man, Miniſter or other, came to propound 'any work of Charity, publick or private, that needed 'to do any more than to propound it: For his heart was 'ſo ſet upon works of mercy that he prevented impor-'tunity, by his Chriſtian and Heroick liberality. He 'made no more of giving ten pounds to a work of Cha-'rity, than many other rich men make of giving ten 'ſhillings. His Charity had two ſingular concomitants-'which made it the more remarkable and praiſe 'worthy.

'1. He did good while he lived: He carryed his 'Lanthorn before him: He made his own hands his 'Executors, and his own eyes his Overſeers. Some 'will part with their riches when they can keep them 'no longer: This is like a Cut purſe, that being eſpied 'or purſued, will drop a purſe of gold, becauſe he can 'keep it no longer. But to be doing good in our life-'time, while we have opportunity; this is an act of 'Faith, and an evidence that we can truſt God with 'our eſtate, and our children, that he will provide for them

'them, when our heads are laid in the grave.

'2. He diſpenſed his Charity ſo ſecretly, without 'any ſelf-ſeeking, or phariſaical vain-glory, that his 'left hand did not know what his right hand did. 'Therefore did he often go with an hundred pounds 'under his cloak to ſome godly friends, deſiring them 'to diſtribute it amongſt ſuch honeſt poor people as 'ſtood in moſt need of relief.

'In brief, He did ſo much good while he lived, as 'if he meant to have nothing to do when he died; And 'yet he gave ſo largely when he came to dye, as if he 'had done no good when he lived.

'Many, I know, are apt to ſay, they have many 'children, and therefore cannot give. So had *Mr. 'Waldow*; He had nine children alive at his death, 'but the providing for them was no obſtruction to his 'Charity, nor prejudice to his Children, but did rather 'entail a bleſſing upon them.

Mr. *John Walter*, *Citizen* and *Draper* of *London*, was ſignally charitable, not only at his death, but in the whole courſe of his life, even from his younger years. For the avoiding of vain-glory, his manner was, to ſend conſiderable ſumms of mony to ſeveral poor families, by the hands of others, in whoſe faithfulneſs he could confide. whereupon God did not only bleſs him with a large eſtate, but likewiſe gave him ſuch contentedneſs therein, that he ſate down abundantly ſatisfied; and made *a ſolemn vow and promiſe unto God*, that he would give the ſurpluſage of his eſtate, whatever it was that for the future ſhould accrew unto him from his calling and employments, to charitable uſes. That you may be aſſured of the truth therof, I have here given you his own expreſſions tranſcribed out of his laſt Will and Teſtament, which are as follows.

*I thought fit to declare, that about twenty years paſt, when the Lord had entruſted me with a convenient eſtate, ſufficient to maintain my charge, and afford fit portions for my wife and children, after my deceaſe; I reſolved that what further eſtate the Lord ſhould be pleaſed to entruſt me with, to beſtow the ſame on charitable uſes.*

After this vow finding his eſtate wonderfully increaſed

fed, he began to build *Alms-houſes*; one in the Pariſh of St. *George* in *Southwark*; another in St. *Mary Newington*; becauſe in thoſe *Pariſhes* he obſerved, there were many blind, lame, diſtreſſed poor people, and never an *Alms-houſe* in them. He likewiſe built a *Chappel* near one of his Alms-houſes for the poor people to ſerve God in daily. Having built his *Alms-houſes* with the *Poors Stock*, he bought *Lands*, and *Houſes of Inheritance*, which he ſetled upon the Company of *Drapers*; as for the relief and ſupport of his *Alms-people*, after his deceaſe; ſo for the performing other charitable Gifts mentioned in his laſt Will and Teſtament. While he lived, he was wont to go himſelf once a Month to his *Alms-houſes* in his worſt Cloaths (that he might not be ſuſpected to be the Founder of them) and gave unto the poor people their promiſed allowance. Doubtleſs that is the beſt Charity, which *Nilus-like*, hath the ſeveral *ſtreams thereof ſeen*, but the *Fountain concealed*. Having built his *Alms-houſes*, and endowed them with a good Revenue; then with the remainder of his *Poor's Stock* (which daily increaſed through Gods bleſſing upon his pains and endeavours in his Calling) he relieved *poor people*, and *Families*, with conſiderable ſums of Money; and gave *much Bread Weekly* to the Poor of ſeveral *Out-Pariſhes*. All this he did whileſt yet living; beſides what he gave upon the like account at his death, which was alſo very conſiderable, as further appears by his Will. Notwithſtanding all which, he gave and left to his Wife, and his two Daughters, above ten thouſand pounds. This queſtionleſs is the ſureſt way to have our WILLS performed, to ſee them performed in our life-time; in regard that many *Executors* prove *Executioners* of WILLS.

*William Pennoyer* Eſquire, Citizen and Merchant of *London*, a perſon wholly compoſed of *mercy* and *goodneſs*, *bounty* and *liberality*, which he expreſſed in the whole courſe of his life, even from his firſt ſetting up in the world. Many years before his death, he turned great part of the Stock wherewith he traded, into Lands of Inheritance, to the value of *four hundred pounds per annum*; and being eminently charitable, he lived

lived as frugally as he could, spending about two hundred pounds a year upon himself, Wife, and Family; and the remaining part of his Incomes, he wholly bestowed on charitable uses, as I have been informed by those who lived long with him, and were nearly related to him.

To give you a clear demonstration of his Christian Charity, and of Gods recompencing the same unto him here in this life with temporal blessings: I shall recite some of his *Legacies* bequeathed in his last Will and Testament, to charitable uses, passing by such as he gave to his rich Kindred and Acquaintance.

'To poor Ministers, Widdows, and others in distress, 'about 150. l.

'To four of his poor Tenants 20 l.

'Likewise 800 l. to be laid out here in Woollen 'Cloth, or other Commodities, to be sent to *New-Eng-'land*, for the use of his poor Kindred there.

'He gave to certain Trustees Lands, to the value of '20 l. *per annum*, to pay for the teaching of forty Boys 'at School.

'To *Bristol* 54 l. *per annum* towards the maintenance 'of a Schoolmaster, and Lecturer, to preach a Week-'day Lecture there; and to other charitable uses.

'He likewise setled 20 l. *per annum* on Trustees, for 'the teaching of forty poor Children in or near *White-'Chappel*; and 40 s. yearly to buy Bibles for some of 'the Children.

'He gave 12 l. *per annum* for the maintaining a 'School at the *Hay* in *Brecknockshire*; and 40 s. more 'yearly to buy Books for the Scholars.

'As also 10 l. *per annum* for the maintenance of poor 'distressed people in the Hospital of *Bethlehem* in *Lon-'don*.

'And 10 l. *per annum* to ten of the blindest, oldest, 'and poorest Cloath-workers, at the discretion of the 'Masters, Wardens, and Assistants of the said Company 'for the time being.

'He gave 40 l. *per annum* to *Christ-Church* Hospital, 'for the placing out four Children yearly; and 40 s. 'more yearly to buy each of the Children a Bible.

'Besides

'Besides these, he gave to his poor Kindred above '2000 l. by his Will.

'And by a Codizel annexed thereunto, he bequeathed 'to certain *Trustees* a 1000 l. to be given to honest poor 'people: As also 300 l. for releasing poor Prisoners; 'which sums have been paid into the hands of the *Tru-'stees* by Mr. *Richard Loton*, and *Michael Davison* Esq; 'who to their Honour have approved themselves '*Faithful Executors* to this Charitable Will.

*Thomas Arnold*, Citizen and Haberdasher of *London*: At his first setting up for himself his Stock was not great; but being charitably disposed, and ready to every good work, his Estate, through Gods blessing, very much increased.

His Charity, in his life time, appeared not only by his forwardness to communicate to the relief of such whom he saw in want; but likewise by his frequent inquiring of others, after such poor people as were overburthened with Children, or otherwise distressed: Yea, he hired men with Money, to make it their business to find out honest poor people, on whom he might bestow his Charity; and likewise did intrust others with considerable sums of money, to distribute amongst the poorest sort, charging them to have special respect to the honest poor, such whom they conceived did truly fear God. That he was no *Loser*, but a *Gainer* by his *Liberality*, appeareth, in that God so blessed him in his Calling, that he attained to an *Alderman's* Estate, and was chosen to that *Office*. Yea, he gave over his Calling in the City, and withdrew himself into the Country, that he might the better mind God, and the concernments of his Soul more, and the world with its concerns less.

*John Clark*, Doctor of *Physick*, one of great repute for his *Learning*, *Piety*, and *Charity*; some while *President* of the *Colledge* of *Physitians*. His custom was to lay by all his *Lords-day* Fees, as a *Sacred Stock* for charitable uses; devoting that intirely to God, which he received on *his day*; accounting it a piece of *Sacrilledge* to appropriate it to himself, or any common use.

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Whereupon the Lord was pleased so to prosper him in his Calling, that though at first his practice was little, and his Estate not very great, yet afterwards his practice so increased, and the World so flowed in upon him, that he lived *plentifully* and *comfortably*, and gave to his Children liberal portions.

The like also was practised by *John Bathurst*, Doctor of *Physick*, with whom I was very well acquainted: His *Lords-days* Fees were constantly kept as a *Bank for the Poor*, and wholly devoted to, and imployed for their use, which was so far from lessening his Incomes, that by the blessing of God upon his practice, they were greatly in few years augmented by it. For though at his first coming to *London* he brought little Estate with him, and here had small acquaintance, *Yorkshire* being his Native Country, where he had spent his former days; yet the Lord was pleased so to prosper him in his Calling, that in twenty years time he purchased *Lands of Inheritance*, to the value of a 1000 l. *per annum*, to speak what I know to be certain; for in the repute of some, his Estate at his death was no less than 2000 l. of yearly value.

Dr. *Edmond Trench* likewise observed the same course, as his Wife, and divers other Friends of his do testifie. And certain it is, that this was no *damage*, but a great *advantage* to him: For he had as many Patients as his weak body would permit him to visit. And, though he lived at a full and plentiful rate, frequently and chearfully entertaining Ministers and Scholars at his Table; yet did he gain a very considerable Estate, which he left to his Wife and Children; in whom not only his Memory, but his Piety still survives.

I have good ground to believe, that many other *Physitians* do make Conscience of this duty; but oh that all would do the like! certainly they would be no *losers* thereby at the years end, but find Gods blessing upon their *Calling* and *Estates* prospering them in both.

And here to me occurs a *Case of Conscience* worthy to be enquired into, viz. *Whether Physitians may lawfully appropriate unto their own private use their Lords-days Fees*; I mean, those Fees which they receive from their *Patients* on the *Sabbath day*?

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I deny not but *Works of Mercy* may, and ought to be done on that day; for, ſaith the Lord, Matth. 9. 13. *I will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice*; that is, Mercy rather than Sacrifice. And I deny not, but of the richer ſort eſpecially, they may receive their Fees for their *pains*. But I much queſtion whether they may *appropriate thoſe Fees to themſelves*; in regard the Lord hath afforded us ſix days of ſeven, wherein we may and ought to follow our Callings for our own livelihood, and of thoſe who belong unto us; but hath ſanctified and ſet apart the Chriſtian Sabbath for his own honour and ſervice. And therefore it ſeemeth but reaſonable, that what accrews unto us on that day, ſhould be ſet apart and imployed for his more immediate uſe and ſervice. But I will not impoſe this as a neceſſary duty, at leaſt upon all, in regard that circumſtances may vary; but leave it at preſent to the determination of their own Conſciences, who are moſt concerned therein.

*Samuel Dunche* of *Puſey*, in the County of *Berks*, Eſquire; a perſon that according to the Apoſtles Rule, *did good to all, but eſpecially to thoſe of the Houſhold of Faith*, His cuſtom was to ſend moneys yearly to ſeveral Towns, as to *Stow* upon the *Woolds* in *Glocester-ſhire*, to *Norliche*, to *Lamburn*, and others not here mentioned, for the relief of their Poor: And upon the laſt here named, he ſetled Lands of Inheritance for ever for the ſame uſe. And to *Rumſey* in *Hampſhire* he gave by Deed, upon the like account, a Leaſe of 99 years to commence after his deceaſe. The Poor alſo of the ſaid Town, whom he call'd his *Almspeople*, had, during his life *Weekly relief from him*; and many other Towns, together with them, were large ſharers in the like bounty.

Several poor Children of the ſaid Town, and likewiſe of thoſe belonging to *Faringdon* he ſet to School, and did not only pay for their teaching, but alſo furniſhed them with all ſuch Books as were fit and convenient for them. He alſo cauſed ſeveral Books to be printed at his own charge, which he freely gave to the Poor, that they might the better be incouraged to read,

and to acquaint themſelves with the concerns of another and better life.

He further gave conſiderable ſums of money yearly for the conſtant ſupply of ſuch godly Miniſters as he knew to be in want: And upon ſeveral of them he ſetled conſiderable Annuities, 10 l. 20 l. *per annum* for their lives; beſides ſuch Legacies which were not ſmall, that he gave to ſome of them at his death.

Beſides all this, his hand was ever open and ready to diſtribute when ever any fit occaſion was offered to him; yea, ſuch was the inlargement of his heart, and renderneſs of his bowels, that he could hardly paſs by any, whom he judged due Objects of his Charity, but he freely and bountifully contributed to their relief.

Thus did this pious Gentleman honour God with his ſubſtance, and adventure upon the Royal Prophets words; *to caſt his bread upon the waters*; which though the unbelieving world accounts but folly, and uſually reckons it amongſt their loſſes; yet he to his advantage, according to the promiſe thereto annexed, *found it again not after many days.* His Bread, like the Loaves with which Chriſt fed the multitude, was multiplied in his hands, and his Oyl increaſed by pouring out. He was but a Younger Brother, and the Eſtate ſetled upon him was but 800 l. *per annum*, or thereabouts: And yet notwithſtanding, I had almoſt ſaid, this Exceſs of Charity, his Eſtate was ſo far from being ruined, or in the leaſt impaired, as that not only the ſame bare meaſure he received, but *much* greater, *preſſed down, and running over, was meeted out to him and his Poſterity.* So ſignally did God in this life reward his Charity, wiſely ordering by his good Providence, that one way or other large handfuls, as over-meaſure, were from ſeveral hands thrown into his Buſhel. There is now left to his Heirs an Eſtate of more than the double value of what he received from his Father, beſides the Portions which he gave to all his Daughters, five in number, which were very conſiderable, to ſome of them more than 2000 l.

And here I hope I may without offence, or vain glory, take liberty to mention, amongſt others, the Charity

rity and Liberality of my dear and honoured Father Doctor *William Gouge*, late Paſtor of *Black-Fryars, London*, who was eminent, as in other Graces, ſo in that of Charity: From him I firſt heard, *The tenth part of a rich mans Eſtate to be a fit proportion to be devoted and dedicated to God for charitable uſes.* But though he commended that to others, yet by what I find in ſome Papers written with his own hand, I may truly ſay, he gave the *ſeventh part of all his yearly comings in*, towards the maintaining poor Scholars at the Univerſity, and the relieving poor Families, and diſtreſſed perſons. And how wonderfully God bleſſed, as his *Miniſtry*, ſo his *outward Eſtate*, is ſo well known to all who lived in his days, that I ſuppoſe it needleſs for me to ſay any thing thereof; only I may truly apply unto him the words of the Pſalmiſt, *He was ever merciful and lending, and his ſeed is bleſſed.*

Many more inſtances of the like nature might here be added; ſome of perſons who are now with joy reaping in the other world the bleſſed fruit of that ſeed which they had ſo plentifully ſown in this: Others of perſons yet living amongſt us, ſome of which have acknowledged to me, *That God hath already rewarded them an hundred-fold for what they have lent to him, by giving it to his Poor.* But theſe already mentioned, may be abundantly ſufficient to evidence the truth in hand, and to incourage and provoke us in imitation of thoſe Worthies, to a more ready and conſcientious practice of this great duty, ſo eſſential to Chriſtianity, ſo well pleaſing to God, ſo creditable to our Profeſſion, ſo beneficial, not only in order to our eternal happineſs, but our preſent gain, comfort, and proſperity here on earth.

The point being thus proved by *Scriptures* and *Examples*, come we now to the Reaſons for the further confirmation thereof.

1. Reaſ. *May be taken from the goodneſs and bounty of God*, which is ſuch, that he will not ſuffer any work of Charity, ſhewed to any of his Miniſters, or Children, to paſs away unrewarded, without a full recompence: Whereupon ſaith *David*, Pſal. 62. 12. *Unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy, for thou rendreſt to every man according*

*to his work.* Though God doth not render a reward to any man *for his work done*, yet doth he render to every man *according to his work.* Yea, God doth always exceed in his remunerations, to give evidence of his grace and bounty. God will not be in any mans debt long, but what he hath disburſed upon his account, he will ſpeedily return into his boſom with advantage.

2. Reaſ. *May be taken from the faithfulneſs and righteouſneſs of God*, who having in his word graciouſly promiſed abundantly to recompence and reward our beneficence, his faithfulneſs and righteouſneſs ingageth him to make good what he hath promiſed; ſo that he cannot but be as good as his word. Men may be forward in promiſing, but ſlow in performing: but with God, who is the true and faithful one, *dictum & factum*, ſaying, and doing, are both alike; *All his promiſes are Yea and Amen in Chriſt Jeſus.* Heb.6. 10. ſaith the Apoſtle; *God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and labour of love, which ye have ſhewed towards his Name, in that ye have Miniſtred to the Saints, and do Miniſter.* Here the Apoſtle argueth a certainty of reward to thoſe who miniſter any thing to the Saints, from the *Righteouſneſs of God*, even becauſe he is righteous; and therefore will not fail to do what he hath promiſed. He is not unrighteous to FORGET; that is, he will righteouſly remember; and Gods remembring, ſignifies the ſame as recompencing: As he will remember ſinners, by recompencing their evil ways upon their own heads; ſo he will remember his Saints, by returning the good that they have done into their own boſoms.

The more to aſſure us of ſuch kind of remembrance from God, the holy Ghoſt mentioneth certain *books*, or *roles of remembrance written before God*, wherein the merciful deeds of his ſervants are recorded. So that it is no more poſſible that ſuch as are charitably benign, and helpful to the poor Miniſters, and people of God ſhould loſe their reward, than that God himſelf ſhould ceaſe to be righteous, or be forgetful of his word.

3. Reaſon. *May be taken from ſeveral metaphorical expreſſions uſed in Scripture, by which Alms-giving is repreſented to us*; all which imply not only a certain return, but

but that with increaſe, as *SOWING*, and *LENDING* and that upon Uſury.

1. *We find it ſet forth in Scripture by* SOWING, 2 *Cor.* 9. 6. *He which ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap ſparingly, and he which ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap bountifully.* This proverbial ſpeech the Apoſtle applyeth to the diſperſing of almes. Now as *Husbandmen*, who ſow their corn with a liberal hand, do uſually reap a crop anſwerable thereunto: In like manner, ſuch Chriſtians as ſhall ſow their ſeed of charity with an open, plentifull hand, ſhall reap accordingly a plentiful crop, they ſhall find their ſeed ſowen come up with increaſe, yielding *thirty*, if not *ſixty*, or *an hundred fold here*, beſides eternal life hereafter. It may be, thou mayſt not preſently reap the fruit of thy ſeed, and what wonder? Who is there that ſowes, who expects to reap the ſame day? The Husbandman waiteth for his harveſt; wait thou on the Lord, and doubt not but an harveſt will come, that will pay thee both for thy ſowing and thy waiting.

2. The ſecond *Metaphor*, whereby Alms-giving is ſetforth in Scripture is *LENDING*, and that upon uſe, *Pro*, 19. 17, *He that hath pity on the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given, will he pay him again.* Men that lend to men receive their own with increaſe: what they lay up lies dead, and poſſibly the Thief may break in, and ſteal it away; but what they lend, if to ſure hands, comes in with advantage. How rich do ſome Uſurers grow by this trade of lending? And though it be a *Paradox*, that *GIVING* is a richer trade than *Lending*, even upon uſe: yet it is a certain truth: for *this giving* is lending: and he that lends to the Lord will find a greater income at the years end, then he that lends to the beſt of men. Therefore as one well ſaith, *Eleemoſyna non eſt divitiarum diſpendium, ſed diteſcendi potius compendium, quæſtuſq; omnium uberrimus*; Giving to the poor is not the way to waſt our wealth, but the art of thriving, and the moſt compendious courſe to attain unto riches. Though our alms-deeds ſeem (as the ſeed ſown) to periſh, and rot; yet believing what we ſee not, we ſhall aſſuredly ſee,

what we believe, and find (even here) ſuch a fruitful increaſe, as we ſhall conclude, *that Giving to charitable uſes is the ſureſt and ſafeſt way of getting, and thriving in the world.*

Thus have you the truth of the point confirmed by *Scriptures, Examples,* and *Reaſons.* Come we now to the application.

1. *Uſe of Reproof of all unmerciful men,* who notwithſtanding the many charges God hath laid upon us, *to be the rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate, to draw forth our ſouls to the hungry, to open our bowels to the needy; and the manifold encouragements he hath given us in his word hereto, yet do ſhut up their bowels of compaſſion from them, refuſing to afford them any ſuccour or relief.* Surely ſuch have no love to Chriſt: for who can ſay he loves the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in truth and ſincerity, when he ſuffers his Miniſters and members to want neceſſaries, even food and rayment? Is this thy love to Chriſt to ſuffer him to ſtarve? It is evident thou loveſt thy money more than Chriſt, and ſo comeſt under that fearful *Anathema,* 1 Cor. 16. 22. If any love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be *Anathema Maranatha*: Theſe two words though both denoting a curſe, are of two ſeveral languages. The former word *Anathema* is a *Greek* word ſignifying *accurſed*; So it is uſed *Rom.* 9. 3. *Gal.* 1. 8. The latter is a *Syriack* word, as *Beza* obſerveth in his Annotations on 1 *Cor.* 16. 22 yet frequently uſed by the *Jews*; it ſignifieth, *Our Lord cometh. Maran* is our Lord; and *atha* cometh; intimating, that ſuch as were under this Curſe, were to expect no mercy, but to look for the dreadful coming of Chriſt to take vengeance of them. So that, as S. *James* ſpeaketh, Chap. 2. 13. *Such ſhall have Judgment without Mercy, that ſhewed no mercy.* How do they think to find mercy from Chriſt, who never ſhewed mercy to him, and his!

I will not condemn all for unmercifulneſs (God forbid I ſhould) many there are (and I would to God they were more) who do contribute bountifully to the neceſſities both of Miniſters, and other poor Saints of God. But yet I have too great cauſe to ſay, that the greateſt

greateſt part of rich men amongſt us have their hearts hardened, and their bowels ſhut up, that they cannot compaſſionate their wants; and their hands withered, like his in the Goſpel, that they cannot reach them out to any good uſe.

Oh that ſuch would conſider, that unmercifulneſs is a greater ſin than they do imagine. It was one of *Sodom*'s ſins which fetched down fire and brimſtone from heaven upon them, and all their Children, *Ezek.* 16.49. Uncharitable men are curſed, as in their life, ſo at their death; but moſt curſed will they be at the Day of Judgment: Being barren fruitleſs trees in Gods Orchard, they ſhall with the barren Fig-tree be ſurely cut down, and caſt into unquenchable fire.

More particularly to ſhew you the miſeries of uncharitable perſons.

1. *They are accurſed here in every thing; all they have is curſed:* So much is implied in that expreſſion of our Saviour, Luke 11.41. *Give alms of ſuch things as you have, and all things are clean unto you*; but without Alms-giving, nothing is clean unto you; that is, nothing is bleſſed and ſanctified unto you, but all things are defiled and curſed: Not only your croſſes are curſes, but your bleſſings are curſes unto you. So God threatneth, *to curſe their very bleſſings*, Mal. 2. 2. Though thou injoyeſt abundance of this worlds goods, yet ſo long as thou art hard-hearted to the poor and needy, the Curſe of God cleaves to thy ſtore and abundance. Oh how ſad and lamentable muſt thy condition needs be, when thoſe things which are not only bleſſings in themſelves, but likewiſe bleſſed unto others, ſhould be curſed unto thee! Surely, to be thus accurſed, is miſery enough.

2. *As the unmerciful are curſed here, ſo ſhall they be curſed hereafter*, Jam. 2. 13. *He ſhall have Judgment without Mercy, that hath ſhewed no Mercy.* Such as have ſhut up their bowels of compaſſion againſt the neceſſities of the Poor, God will ſhut up his bowels of compaſſion againſt them, and let forth his fury upon them, they ſhall have their portion in his plagues and indignation, without the leaſt drop of pity or mercy. And at the day of Judgment Chriſt will ſay unto them,

Matth. 25. 41. *Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels:* There's their doom; and why? *For I was an hungry, and ye gave me no meat, I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink.* Oh dreadful ſentence! every word whereof carrieth much terrour in it, and breatheth nothing but fire and brimſtone. What! muſt they *depart from Chriſt*, the Fountain of Bliſs and Happineſs? and into *everlaſting fire?* Ah wretches! curſed indeed. For as the Prophet ſpeaketh, Iſa. 33. 14. *Who can dwell with devouring fire who can dwell with everlaſting burnings?* An everlaſting Fever, or but an everlaſting Toothach, were a miſery unſpeakable. But what are theſe to the *lying in that Lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone to all Eternity?* Oh methinks, the name of *everlaſting fire*, and *everlaſting burnings*, ſhould awaken all uncharitable men out of their ſecurity, and ſtir them up, without any further delay, to bewail their former unmercifulneſs, to beg the pardon thereof, and unfeignedly to reſolve, willingly to give out of their ſtore, towards the relief of the Poor, proportionably to what God hath graciouſly beſtowed on them. It may be thou haſt a plentiful portion of this worlds goods; but oh, what will it profit thee to live plentifully here, and to be eternally miſerable hereafter? Seriouſly I cannot but ſtand amazed to conſider, how men who do believe the words of Chriſt to be true, that all uncharitable men ſhall by him at the laſt day be ſentenced into everlaſting burning for their not feeding the hungry, nor cloathing the naked; and yet can be ſo hard-hearted, as not to hearken to the cry of the Poor.

3. *The miſery of uncharitable perſons appeareth in this, that the wants and neceſſities of the Poor cry loud to Heaven againſt them.* God hath *dealt bountifully with thee, loading thee with his benefits* (as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaketh, *Pſal.* 68. 19.) and hath given thee not only food and rayment, things needful and neceſſary, but an abundance, an affluency of outward things, even all things richly to enjoy: But how many of Chriſts Miniſters and Members are in great want, not having wherewithal to ſatisfie their own and childrens hunger? whoſe

whoſe miſeries, like the blood of *Abel*, cry unto God for vengeance againſt thee, ſaying, *Lord, there are not a few who have enough, and to ſpare, a liberal portion of this worlds goods, with* Dives *they fare ſumptuouſly every day: but what are we thy wanting ſervants the better for them? Who of us are warmed with their fires, or cloathed with their rayment, or ſo much as partake of the Crums of their Table? We are ready to periſh for want, when they are ſurfeited with their abundance. Is the bleſſing of them that are ready to periſh like to come upon them? Wilt not thou judge them, O Lord?* Certainly, theſe bitter and lamentable complaints cry loud in the eares of the Almighty againſt ſuch unchriſtian and inhumane Miſers. Beware of the cry of the poor againſt you: If thou wilt not hear their cries unto thee, God will hear their cries againſt thee.

3. *Thy unmercifulneſs to the poor will provoke God to reject thy moſt religious exerciſes*; Pro. 21. 13. *Whoſo ſtoppeth his eares at the cry of the poor, he alſo ſhall cry himſelf: but ſhall not be heard.* In Which Words *Solomon* hinteth to us two things.

1. That unmerciful men, ſuch as turn away their ears from the cry of the poor, ſhall fall into ſuch miſeries as will bring them to their knees, and make them cry ſooner or latter. Here in this world wordly men ſometimes make many prayers, and their religion they hope will make amends, for their inhumanity at leaſt. But in the world to come they ſhall follow their fellow *Dives* in his infernal devotion.

2. *Though they cry, yet they ſhall not be heard*: whether they cry here upon their death-beds for mercy, or hereafter in Hell for eaſe, they ſhall not be heard. A notable inſtance hereof we have in *Dives*, who though he cryed not here, yet he cryed in hell, ſaying, *Father Abraham have mercy on me, and ſend Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame*, Luk, 16. 24. But was he heard? was his requeſt granted? 'twas a ſmal requeſt, but yet it is denyed. Becauſe he denyed crumbs of bread here in this life to the poor, he was denied a drop of water in Hell. *Non habuit guttam quia non dedit micam.* Auſt.

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And as thy prayers are rejected by God, ſo likewiſe will it be in vain for thee to hear the word, or come to the table of the Lord. All thy religion will be in vain, ſhall I ſay? Nay it will be an abomination to the Lord, whilſt that accurſed thing thy covetous, and cruel heart, which the Lord abhorreth, (*Pſal.* 10. 3.) remaines within thee. Think not that one duty will excuſe the neglect of another, that thy praying may ſerve inſtead of thine alms, that religion ſhall excuſe thy mercy, or thy confeſſion of thine unmercifulneſs will make up the matter. The Lord abhorred thee and all thy Sacrifices, Whilſt the Sacrifice of a compaſſionate heart is wanting.

O that all uncharitable perſons would ſteep their thoughts in a ſerious meditation of theſe things: and as they deſire to prevent thoſe judgements which accompany all mercileſs men, they would put in for a ſhare in the mercies of the merciful, and to that end, would put on bowels of pity and compaſſion towards the wants and miſeries of Gods diſtreſſed ones, and ſtretch forth an helping hand towards their relief, which leadeth me to a Second Uſe, namely

2. Uſe *of Exhortation, to ſtir up every one who have given up their names unto Chriſt, to make conſcience, as of every duty commanded by him, ſo of this eſpecially, which he hath ſo vehemently preſſed upon us in his word, and encouraged us unto by many ſweet and precious promiſes.* This work of charity is *wages*, and like *Sampſons Lyon* it carrieth honey in the belly of it. He who out of a principle of love, in obedience to Gods command, ſhall open his heart and hand wide to the poor, ſhall find God bleſſing his ſtock and ſtore, and proſpering all his undertakings. As there is a *Secret curſe* goes out from God upon the uncharitable mans eſtate, which blaſteth all his projects, and undertakings whereby they prove altogether fruitleſs: So there is a *Secret bleſſing* goes out from God upon the charitable mans eſtate, whereby he thrives and proſpers in the world; even to his own and neighbours admiration.

It is obſerved that they are the richeſt Merchants and Citizens who trade boldly: whereas they who

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are fearful to adventure their goods, have but ſmall returns. In like manner it is found by experience, that ſuch Chriſtians as are moſt forward to ſupply the wants of the poor, boldly adventuring their goods upon the waters, do moſt of all thrive, and proſper in the world. Why then will any man be ſo unwiſe, as to loſe his riches for fear of loſing them? And not rather ſeem to loſe them that he may in truth find them? Theſe earthly things are aſſuredly loſt by keeping, and kept by well beſtowing them.

What now remaineth but that you look about you, where you may lay out your money to your beſt advantage? Make diligent enquiry after the poor Miniſters and members of Chriſt. Seek more after them than they do after you. For moſt certain it is, that you get more by giving unto them, than they do by receiving from you. And you are more beholding unto them for receiving your charity, than they are unto you for giving it. Whereas you only relieve *their bodies*, they feed *your ſouls*, as Pro. 11. 17. *The merciful man doth good to his own ſoul* which is refreſhed with the mercy which he ſheweth to others. And whereas they partake of a ſmall quantity of your outward good things, you ſhall have the ſame in kind here returned ſeven-fold into your boſomes, and at laſt ſhall be received into the Kingdom of heaven, prepared for all thoſe who have fed the hungry, cloathed the naked, and performed ſuch like works of charity to the poor members of Chriſt, *Matth.* 25. 35. So that you pleaſure not the poor ſo much by *giving*, as you profit your ſelves by *receiving*.

Riches are a meer uncertainty, like unto a flock of birds in a mans field, who cannot ſay they are his becauſe they ſit there, *for they take unto themſelves wings, and fly away.* Now in dealing with things uncertain, it will be your wiſdome,

1. *To make them as ſure as you can.*
2. *To make the beſt uſe of them that you can.*

1. What greater wiſdome than to make ſure? And what better way imaginable to make ſure your eſtate, than by putting it into good hands? And what ſafer hands than the hands of the Lord? Put them into the hands of Gods poor, and you thereby put them into Gods hands.

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As in a State Politick, the *Lieger Ambaſſadors* that are ſent abroad to lye in forreign Kingdoms ſecure our peaceable ſtate at home: So what we diſperſe and ſend abroad to the poor, ſecureth the reſt at home. For as the poor beg of thee, ſo they beg of God for thee, that he would preſerve and bleſs thy ſtore: their devotions are ſent up to heaven for thy Security.

2. *And what better uſe can you make of your riches, than by beſtowing a part of them upon the poor and needy?* It being the chief end of Gods giving more of this worlds goods to ſome than to others, that they who have the greater ſtore ſhould give out thereof to them who are in want. Which was *typically* ſignified by the *Iſraelites* gathering of *Manna*, which though it were rained down from heaven, yet the Lord would not allow, that they who had gathered more than was needful for themſelves, and their houſehold, ſhould hoard up their ſuperfluity, but enjoyned them to communicate of their abundance to ſuch as had not enough, that ſo he that had the moſt, ſhould have nothing over; and he that had the leaſt, ſhould have no lack. The which the Apoſtle applyeth to the giving of almes out of our abundance to thoſe who want, 2. *Cor.* 8. 14.

By communicating of our riches to the poor, we ſhall make them *our friends*, both to give evidence for us of the truth of our *faith*, and *charity*, and to beg a plentiful return upon us: This is the advice of our Saviour, *Luke*, 16. 9. *Make to your ſelves friends of the Mammon of unrighteouſneſs, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlaſting habitations.* Where, by *Mammon*, our Saviour intendeth *the abundance of this worlds goods*, which he called *Mammon* of *unrighteouſneſs*, becauſe ordinarily by wordly men it is unrighteouſly gotten, unrighteouſly reſerved, and unrighteouſly uſed. This he hinteth, that his Diſciples might be the more wary about it, and the more careful of *making themſelves friends thereof*, that is, ſo to uſe their riches by relieving the poor, as the good works done by them may give teſtimony of their *Faith* and *Charity*, which is the part of Friends. Friends are ready to give good teſtimony of one another The coats and garments which *Dorcas* made for poor widdows

dows *Acts* 9.39. were ſuch *friends*. But mark what follows, Make to your ſelves friends of the Mammon of unrighteouſneſs, *that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlaſting habitations. When ye fail*, that is, when ye depart out of this world, *they may receive you into everlaſting habitations*. This particle *THEY*, ſome refer to them who being relieved call upon God to recompenſe their benefactors, ) but moſt refer it to the *Riches* which they beſtow upon the poor, which, by vertue of the evidence they give of the *faith* and *charity* of the giver, are ſaid to receive them into everlaſting habitations.

Surely, rich men have a price in their hands, wherewith to purchaſe to themſelves a good inheritance, had they but hearts to make uſe of it. Though charity pretend not to any merit *ex congruo*, or *condigno* yet will it be plentifully recompenced by God both here and hereafter.

I hope you will pardon my zeal in preſſing this duty of *charity* ſo much upon you: I do aſſure you, it is not out of any deſign to take any thing from your ſelves, and children, but only to ſhew you *the ſureſt and ſafeſt way of thriving in the world*; and how you may entail Gods bleſſing upon your children, and ſo ſecure unto them the portion which you leave them, I am willing to do you a kindneſs, and I ſhall do you a great kindneſs, if I can but effectually perſwade you to this duty: Whatever kindneſs I may herein do to thoſe who need, I ſhall do a greater kindneſs to you that will be perſwaded to help them in their need; in as much as it is a more bleſſed thing to give, than to receive. And therefore bear with me, if I do not only offer you a kindneſs, but uſe ſuch importunity to preſs you to accept it.

The *Apoſtle*, knowing how backward rich men eſpecially were to all works of charity, adviſeth *Timothy* ( 1 *Tim.* 6.17. ) not only to *commend* unto them the duty, but to *command* it. The expreſſion of the *Apoſtle* is very obſervable, He doth not ſay ἀγγέλλε *declare* unto them but παράγγελλε *charge* them that are rich in this world, as they love their lives, and would ſave their ſouls,

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to be rich in good works. As one wittily glosseth upon those words of the Apostle. 'If God should charge the 'Rocks, they would send forth water: If the *Stones*, they 'would become bread: If the *Ravens*, they would feed '*Elijah*: If the *Quails*, they would victual the Camp: 'If the *Clouds*, they would rain down food from heaven 'upon his poor people; will you be more rocky than 'rocks? more stony then stones? more ravenous than 'ravens? more senseless than birds? more empty than 'clouds?

If you be rich in this worlds goods, and be not rich in good works, talk not of your *faith*, for there can be no true faith without good works, Jam. 2. 17. Neither tell me of your religion: for there can be no true Religion in you, so long as you make no conscience of this duty. *Pure religion*, saith the Apostle *James, chap.* 1. 27. *(is this) To visit the Fatherless and widdows in their afflictions*, and you never learned other Religion of us.

The Lord indeed giveth us leave to eat and to drink and to chear up our hearts by partaking, in some measure of that portion he hath bestowed on us: but he never allowed us to keep all unto our selves, or to spend it in the gratifying our sinful lusts, but commands us to set a part some portion of our estate for the relief of those for whom nothing is provided; *Prov.* 3. 9. Saith the wise-man, *Honour the Lord with thy substance.* He doth not say, *Honour thy self with thy riches, but honour the Lord with them*; as they come from his grace, so they should be used to his glory. Now then we use our riches to Gods glory, when in obedience to his command, we therewith supply the want, of his children, who will thereby be stirred up to bless and praise the name of God for his Fatherly care and providence over them.

Shall I yet again need to tell thee, that thy liberality to the poor cannot bring any loss to thine estate, seeing, the more thou giveſt, the more thou shalt receive? It is fabled of *Midas*, that *whatsoever he touched was turned into gold.* But it is no fable, nor fancy, that the hand of charity can do it; can extract

grace

grace out of your goods, righteouſneſs out of riches, and heaven out of earth. The imparting of goods to ſuch good uſes, whileſt it ſeems to *impair*, doth mightily *improve* what you have, to your moſt ſingular advantage. The more liberal any man is, the more likely he is to be a rich man: the mercy of God will crown his beneficence with ſuch a bleſſing of ſtore that he ſhall find, He will never be behind hand with him. Its nothing which the poor receive from him, in compariſon of that bleſſing which he ſhall receive from the Lord. It may be, thou doſt not find thy ſtore thereupon preſently increaſed, yet if thou diligently obſerveſt the paſſages of Gods providence towards thee, thou wilt ſooner or later find thy ſelf abundantly reimburſed of all thy disburſments.

I told you before that I am willing to do you a kindneſs: and that it may be a kindneſs indeed, I muſt farther tell you, not only what you ſhould do, but *How you muſt do it, that you may not loſe your reward.* And if you would make ſure to be gainers by whatever you thus lay out, obſerve the following *DIRECTIONS.*

1. *Give your ſelves to the Lord, and with your ſelves, all that ever you have, to be ſo laid out, whether upon your ſelves or others, as He doth appoint and require.*

2. *Cor.* 8. 2. The *Apoſtle* boaſting of the *Macedonian Chriſtians*, and of the riches of their liberality, tells us ver. 5. *That they firſt gave themſelves to the Lord.* He that will not give *himſelf* to the Lord, is like to give but little elſe. And if he ſhould give all that he had, and only withhold himſelf, God will not accept, nor reward it. God will have nothing of thee, if he may not have thy Heart.

Give your ſelves for *Servants* to the Lord, to ſerve him with your Spirits firſt, and then with all that you have. Make over you ſelves to God in Chriſt to be his *Covenant Servants*, and thence-forth count and ſay of your ſelves, as the *Apoſtle* teacheth you. 1. *Cor.* 6. 23. *I am not mine own, but muſt henceforth glorifie God with my body and my ſpirit, yea and with all that I have, which are his.*

He knows not what he ſays, that ſays *I ſerve the*

*Lord*

*Lord, who hath not first given himself to him for a servant*; God will not be served by Aliens. And he hath but lyed unto God, who says, *I give my self unto the Lord for a servant*, and doth not actually serve him with all that he hath. He that hath given *himself* to the Lord, will withhold nothing from him that God will have.

He that will serve the Lord with his spirit, will as readily serve him with all that he hath. God that hath given us his *Son*, how *will he not with him freely give us all things, Rom.* 1. 32? And that Man that hath given God his soul, will keep back nothing from Him.

Friend, thou sayst thou art the *Lords*, and hast devoted thy self to him; thou hopest that thou art Christs, and hast joyned thy self in covenant unto him, resolving to be his Disciple: but, which way runs thine estate! whose house is this, these lands, and this mony which thou hast, are these the Lords to? How is it then that thy *lusts* have so much of them at their service? That thy *pride* hath so much, and thine appetite so much, or that they are all impropriated and kept by thee to feed thy *covetousness*? Is all thou hast the *Lords*? How is it then that thou begrutchest, or thinkest-so-much of every little that he calls for from thee? Thou who wilt not in every case part with so much as God calls for, art either a Lyar, or a Robber. Either thou didst not give all to God, when thou saidst thou didst, and then thou art a *Lyar*: or if thou didst give all, and yet will not let him have what he calls for, but bestowest it elsewhere, then thou art a *Robber*.

Obj. *But some will say, Must I give all I have to the poor, and so leave my self, and my family to be beggars? Or, what else is your meaning, when you say, I must give all to the Lord?*

My meaning is, *that you so give all to the Lord, as to resolve to dispose of your whole estate to such persons and purposes, as God orders and appoints you*, The Lord would have you live, and maintain your self, and provide for your family soberly according to your rank and degree (some extraordinary cases being excepted.) But still you must allow no more to your self, nor no less to those in need, then is according to the will, and good-pleasure of the Lord.

*Some other will here put in and say: But I am free and bountiful*

*bountiful, and give great alms; I caſt my bread upon the waters; I give a portion to ſix, and alſo to ſeven: I deviſe liberal things, I delight to ſhew mercy.*

Doſt thou ſo? 'Tis well thou doſt. Gods bleſſing on thine heart for it: 'tis great pity that any liberal man in the world ſhould loſe his reward; And that thou maiſt not loſe thine; take this Counſel of a friend that loves thee, See that thou haſt ſincerely given up thy ſelf to God as his *covenant-ſervant*, and art a devoted Diſciple of Jeſus Chriſt, and that theſe thy works of Mercy are done in purſuance of thy Covenant, as a part of that ſervice which thou oweſt and haſt vowed to thy Lord, whoſe thou art, and whoſe talents thon reckoneſt all thou haſt. And look to this the rather, becauſe its poſſible that men of great good works may be, as of little charity, ſo of little faith alſo, which is that grace which entitles God to us, and all we do, and obtains our acceptance with Him. Firſt, by faith give thy ſelf to him, and then by charity ſerve Him with what thou haſt, and then doubt not of a plentiful return.

II. *Offer up your gift upon the Altar.* Give your ſelves and with your ſelves all that you have *through Chriſt* unto God. Let him be *your Altar that ſanctifies your gift*: 'tis through him alone you will be accepted, *Eph.* 1.6. *He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.* Let your *Souls be ſprinkled with his Blood*, and thereby waſhed from your blood, from your natural and contracted guilt, and pollution, and then they will be a gift acceptable to the Lord. Do not think you have no more to do but to give your ſelves as you are to the Lord: you have given your ſelves to ſin, and now, it may be you think, you will give your ſelves back to the Lord: but know there is more in it than ſo, Thou art in thy ſelf a guilty and defiled ſoul, and God will have none of thee in this caſe: Go to *Chriſt* firſt, and get him to cover thine unrighteouſneſs, and to cleanſe thee from thy filthineſs, put thy wretched ſoul into his hands, and let him preſent it unto the Father.

And what ever thou giveſt with thy ſelf, *thine Alms, thy bread*, or *thy fleſh*, or *thy money*, that thou haſt for his poor; put it all into the ſame hand, and let him

preſent this alſo to the Father for the uſe of his Servants.

Friends, though I would have you givers, yet I would not have you loſers. I would not have you loſers, either by *Saving*, or by *unprofitable Giving*.

1. *Be not loſers by Saving.* That's the next way to *loſe all*, by thinking to *ſave, and keep all to your ſelves. He that will ſave his life*, that is, by not laying it down when God calls for it, *he ſhall loſe it.* And ſo *he that will ſave his eſtate*, that is, *by refuſing to lay it out where* God would have him, *he is the more like to loſe all that he hath.*

2. *Loſe not by unprofitable Beſtowing.* All that is beſtowed unprofitably, as to thee, to whomſoever thou giveſt it, which is not given firſt through Chriſt unto God, and to his ſervants for the Lords ſake. It may be profit however to them, who receive it, but no profit to thee who giveſt. 'Tis onely what's given to God, and to men for Gods ſake, for which God becomes debtor.

III. *Fetch all your alms out of your hearts. Draw forth thy ſoul to the hungry*, Iſa. 58. 10. Give what thou giveſt, 1. *Out of a willing heart.* 2. *Out of a compaſſionate heart.* 3. *Out of a thankful heart.*

1. *Out of a willing heart*; *Give willingly*, 2 Cor. 9.6. *Every man as he purpoſeth in his heart, ſo let him give, not grudgingly, or of neceſſity, for God loveth a cheerful giver.* An alms-deed in Scripture is called a *Sacrifice*, ſuch a Sacrifice as is well pleaſing unto God, *Heb.* 13. 16. *To do good, and to communicate, forget not, for with ſuch Sacrifices God is well pleaſed.* Now all our Chriſtian Sacrifices are to be *free-will Oblations.* An alms without a will, is a Sacrifice without an heart, and will be rejected of God.

2. *Out of a Compaſſionate heart.* Get a compaſſionate heart, and fetch all thine alms out of thine own bowels. 'Tis *the hard heart of men* that ſhuts up their *purſes*: thou ſay'ſt, Thou haſt not to ſpare, thou wanteſt it thy ſelf, or thoſe about thee may want it: *No, thou wanteſt an heart*, and that is the reaſon that thoſe that need, muſt want

want *thine Alms.* A compaſſionate heart would find ſomething, or other, for thoſe that are in diſtreſs.

Get a compaſſionate heart. God is a God of compaſſion, and his Children are compaſſionate Children, *Col.* 2. 12. *Put on, (as the Elect of God) bowels of Mercy.* 1 John 3. 17. *Whoſo hath this worlds goods, and ſeeth his Brother in need, and ſhutteth up his bowels of compaſſion from him, (or is a man of no bowels) how dwelleth the love of God in him?* What ever thy Profeſſion, or thy Religion be, or thy hopes be concerning it, thou haſt nothing of God in thee, thou art none of his, who haſt no bowels. God is a God of mercy, his Children are all merciful Children.

Worldling, wilt thou prove thy ſelf to be *no Child of God?* Wouldſt thou prove that the *Faith* thou haſt is *vain*, thy *Religion vain*, and that thou art but *a pretender to the love of God*, and haſt not the love of God within thee? This unmercifulneſs of thine will put it out of queſtion. If thou haſt no bowels of compaſſion, the love of God is not in thee.

O get a compaſſionate and merciful heart. Haſt thou received mercy, and wilt thou not be merciful? Doſt thou hope for mercy, and wilt thou not ſhew mercy? Put thy ſelf into thy poor Brothers caſe a while, think how hard 'tis with him; think of his *hunger* and *nakedneſs*, of his *preſſing ſtraits and miſeries*, let thy Soul go into his houſe, and ſee *his naked walls, his cold Chimney, his empty Cup-board, his ſtarveling Children:* and then think again, O how if it were thus with me! Ah poor diſtreſſed Creatures; how are they *pinch'd* and *pin'd*, whilſt I have enough, and abound? O my *bowels* how can you but yern? O mine *heart*, how canſt thou but bleed over ſuch diſtreſſed ones? Haſt thou nothing to help them? There's enough in my houſe, there's enough in my Purſe to yield them relief, but is there no Alms for them in my heart? Can I have the heart to ſee them pine and periſh, and do nothing to help them? Where are ye, O my bowels? Where are my compaſſions? O my ſoul help, and ſend portions to them for whom nothing is provided.

3. *Out of a thankful heart.* Remember what God

hath done for thee; Haſt thou any ſenſe or experience of his ſpecial love to thee in Chriſt? What ſhould that produce? The ſenſe of divine Goodneſs in a way of *Common Providence* calls for all due acknowledgment from us: But a *taſte* of his *paternal love in pardoning our ſins, and juſtifying our perſons, and inſtating us in eternal life and happineſs; upon the account of his Sons ſuffering and dying for us*; this is, as the ſtrongeſt *Motive* to, ſo the moſt *commanding Reaſon* of our charity, or beneficence to our Fellow-creatures, who ſtand in need of it.

In Chriſt the beams of Gods mercy are concentred, as the beams of the Sun are in a Burning-glaſs, which falling upon our hearts, they are or ſhould be hereby inflamed, and made to burn with greater heat of love and kindneſs to all in want, eſpecially to all who bear his Image. *The right Spring of Mercy to our Neighbour, is the ſenſe of Gods Mercy towards us.*

IV. *Let all your ſtreams of love flow into the Ocean.* My meaning is, *Let all be done to the glory of God.* This muſt be your laſt end to which all muſt be directed, as the Apoſtle charges, 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. *Whether you eat or drink*; I may add, or whether you give to eat, or to drink, *or whatſoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* Let this be chiefly in your eye, and your heart, *that God may be glorified.* Other ſubordinate ends there are; as *the refreſhing of the Needy*, the *adorning our holy Profeſſion*, the *edification of others by our good example*; but all at laſt muſt end here, *that God may be glorified.*

Take heed your end be not to glorifie your ſelves. As *Worms* breed in the faireſt fruit, ſo *Pride* and *Vain-glory* are apt to creep up out of the beſt duties.

V. *Let your works of Charity be done in humility, giving unto God the honour of them, by acknowledging that as what you have beſtowed on the Poor, you firſt received from him: So it was his goodneſs to give you an heart to give any thing out of your abundance towards their relief.* Yea, you ought to be ever jealous over your ſelves, leſt there hath been ſome *hypocriſie* and *ſelf-ſeeking* in your works of *Charity*, acknowledging that you are ſo far from meriting *Heaven*, and *Salvation by your good works*, that if God

God ſhould deal with you according to the rigour of his Juſtice, he might caſt you into *Hell*, for that *Pride* and *Hypocriſie* which cleaves to your beſt works.

VI. *Let your works of Charity to men be accompanied with prayers, and thanksgivings unto God.* Thank God, that he hath put you amongſt the *Givers*, and not amongſt the *Receivers*; it being *a more bleſſed thing to give, than to receive*: that he hath put you among the *givers*, and not the *withholders*: that he hath given you an *eſtate* to give, and an *heart* to give. Thank God that he will accept a gift at your hands; that he, whoſe is all you have, and to whom it is owing, will account that a gift, which is but the payment of ſo ſmall a part of your debt: ſay with *David*, in 1 *Chro.* 29. 11, 13. *Thine, O Lord, is the greatneſs; both riches and honour come from thee: Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praiſe thy glorious Name. But what am I, and what is my people, that we ſhould be able to offer ſo willingly after this ſort? For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.*

VII. *Give out proportionably to what God hath given unto you,* 1 *Cor.* 16. 2. The Apoſtle adviſeth the *Corinthians* to give, *as God had proſpered them.*

Rich men therefore ought to be *rich in good works*, for God expecteth fruit anſwerable to the ſeed which he ſoweth. Hath he *abounded* to you in this worlds goods? you ought thereupon to be *abundant* in good works towards others: your Pounds are *expected*, where the Widdows Mites are *accepted.*

Having given you ſome *Directions* for the *manner* of beſtowing your Alms, I ſhall briefly ſhew you the means how to attain to this grace of *Chriſtian Charity.*

Now the means I ſhall preſcribe, ſhall be,

1. *Such as tend to the bringing your hearts to be willing to this Duty.*

2. *Such as ſhall tend to the helping of you for the better managing of it.*

Firſt, for *means to bring your hearts to be willing to ſet upon this Duty, take theſe.*

1. *Oft call to mind, and imprint in your memories the manifold Precepts in the Scriptures, requiring this Duty at*

*your hands. As alſo the many gracious promiſes God hath there made for the incouragement of his people thereunto*; and thereupon reaſon thus with thy ſelf, *What? Hath God* commanded me, (Deut. 15. 10.) *to give unto my Brother according to his neceſſity? to caſt my bread upon the waters?* Eccl. 11. 1. And hath our bleſſed Saviour commanded me, Luk. 6. 38. *to give unto the poor?*

And hath the Lord for my incouragement thereunto promiſed, *that he will bleſs me in all my works, and in all that I put my hand unto, proſper me in my Trade and Calling? That my Barns ſhall be filled with plenty? That what we ſhall give or lend unto the poor, he will pay us again with Intereſt? That though I caſt my bread upon the waters,* where it may ſeem to be loſt, *yet I ſhall find it after many days*, it ſhall certainly be returned into my boſom with increaſe? And hath my *Saviour* for my incouragement promiſed, Luk. 6. 36. *That if I give unto the poor, it ſhall be given to me again, good meaſure, preſſed down, and ſhaken together, running over?* Then certainly, *there is no ſuch compendious way to thrive and proſper in the world, as by my liberality to the poor.*

2. *Preſer Heaven, and the things thereof, before this earth, and earthly things.* Though the temporal reward which I have ſo much inſiſted on, be a great incouragement, yet the greateſt incouragement is the *ſpiritual* and *eternal* reward that the Lord hath promiſed. And that this may be the more prevailing incouragement, *learn to eſteem and prize things ſpiritual and eternal, above all things that are but temporal.* Suppoſe it ſhould ſo fall out, that you ſhould never receive *in kind* what you beſtow, yet count thoſe *temporal* things put off at the beſt rate, which you receive in things *ſpiritual* and *eternal.* Value *grace* and *glory* above all the *treaſures of the earth*, and count your ſelves to grow rich men, according to your abounding in grace, and your evidences for glory. And eſteem it an unthrifty ſaving, and holding in, where you have an opportunity to improve in *your inner man*, by expending of *your outward ſubſtance.*

Till Heaven be valued above earth, this great Argument incouraging to Acts of Bounty and Mercy, will loſe

loſe its efficacy. When God ſays, *Caſt thy bread upon the waters, for thou ſhalt find it again after many days*, the Worldling will be ready to demand, But how ſhall I find it? in what way ſhall it be returned me? Shall I have *bread* for *bread*, or *money* for my *bread*, or *houſes* or *Lands* for my *money*? Probably thou mayſt. But ſuppoſe not ſo, yet it ſhalt be better than ſo, thou ſhalt have *in grace* what thou parteſt with in *bread* or *money*: thou ſhalt reap *in Heaven*, what thou ſoweſt *on the Waters*.

I but the Worldling will reply; *I do not mean to part with my bread, or my money ſo.* No, I know thou doſt not; but the reaſon is, becauſe thou loveſt this earth more than Heaven. Thou ſayeſt, will *Grace* feed me? will *Grace* cloath me? Can I keep my ſelf, and my Family? Can we live, and be maintained and preſerved from poverty and beggery here, by hopes of glory hereafter?

Go Fool, and learn better what God is, and what his everlaſting mercy is; let the laſting treaſures, the durable riches be more priz'd and valued by thee, and this will ſtop thy mouth, and ſilence thine heart from ſuch vain reaſonings. Thou wilt never again ſay, I cannot ſpare my bread, or my money, when by ſpending it for God thou ſeeſt thou makeſt him thy Debtor, who will pay it thee again in ſpiritual and eternal good things, if once thou account theſe to be better than thy bread, or thy money.

But till thou art come to be ſettled in this Judgment, and belief, both that the good things of God are infinitely better than the good things of this earth; and that what thou ſoweſt in the earth, thou ſhalt certainly reap in Heaven, till thou comeſt in good earneſt to be of this mind, Gods Poor are like to be but little the better for thee.

'Tis this, Beloved, that will effectually do it, will open your hearts, and open your hands in bounty and liberality for God, when you come to be rooted in the practical belief of this *Principle*, upon which the practice of all Religion ſtands, and is upheld in the world, *That Heaven is better than Earth:* if this other be added

to it, That *what is ſincerely laid out for God in the Earth, ſhall certainly be repayed in Heaven*: beſides that return which the Lord here in this world oftentimes makes to the charitable.

2. For the means tending to help you for the better managing of it; take theſe following.

1. *Either follow the example of the Primitive Saints, in ſetting apart ſomething every Lords Day out of the former Weeks gettings.*

Or 2. *Devote unto God a certain portion of thy yearly Incomes for charitable uſes.*

That the former way of ſetting apart ſomething every Lords Day for the relief of the Poor, was the practice of the Primitive Chriſtians, is clear from that of the Apoſtle to the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. 16. 1, 2. *Now concerning the Collection for the Saints, as I have given order to the Churches of* Galatia, *even ſo do ye. Upon the firſt day of the Week* (which is the Lords Day) *let every one of you lay by him in ſtore, as God hath proſpered him.* This way and courſe concerns ſuch in ſpecial who live upon their daily labours.

But to ſuch Gentlemen, and others who live upon their Rents and Offices; and to ſuch Merchants and Citizens who once a year caſt up their accounts, I would commend the latter way of devoting unto God a certain portion of their yearly Income by Rent, or otherwiſe; and then ſeparating it from the reſt, to account it a *Sacred Stock* for the Poor, not to be imployed to any other uſe.

All men naturally (through the corruption that is in them) are hard-hearted, and cloſe-handed, very unwilling to part with any thing conſiderable upon ſudden occaſions for charitable uſes. But having aforehand ſet apart ſomething, their ears, hearts and hands, are open to every charitable motion, and very ready and forward are they the more liberally to contribute thereunto of what is laid by, rejoycing that they have met with ſo good an Object of Charity.

As for the *quota pars*, what proportion every one ought to ſet apart out of his yearly Income for good uſes,

uſes, I do not find it particularly ſet down in the Word of God; and therefore dare not poſitively determine the ſame; and the rather, becauſe there are ſo many circumſtances which alter the caſe, that no certain rule can be given, but ſhall leave it to the diſcretion and ingenuity of the prudent Chriſtian.

But though the Scripture doth not determine the exact proportion to be ſet apart for good works, yet doth it command us, *to give out proportionably to what God hath given unto us*; *to open our hands wide to the neceſſities of the Poor*; *to be rich in good works*, and the like. Yea the Scripture doth commend unto us the examples of very bountiful Chriſtians; as of *Dorcas*, who is ſaid to be *full of good works, and Alms-deeds which ſhe did*, Act. 9. 36. And of *Cornelius*, who is ſaid *to give much Alms*, Act. 10. 2. And of the *Macedonians*, who are ſaid, *to give to their power, yea and beyond their power*, 2 Cor. 8. 3. It likewiſe commendeth unto us the example of *Jacob*, who in teſtimony of his thankfulneſs unto God for what he ſhould beſtow upon him, vowed the tenth thereof unto God for pious and charitable uſes; as *Gen.* 28. 20, 22. *And* Jacob *vowed a vow unto God, ſaying, Of all that thou ſhalt give me, I will ſurely give the tenth unto thee.*

Theſe examples are left upon Record for our imitation; for as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh, Rom. 15. 4. *Whatſoever things were written afore-time, were written for our learning, and for our admonition.* The moſt that I have heard, or read of, who have taken this courſe, to conſecrate unto God a certain portion of their Eſtate to charitable uſes, have followed the example of *Jacob*, in giving a tenth part unto God. And as God did exceedingly bleſs *Jacob* after his Vow; ſo hath he likewiſe bleſſed very many others, after their like Vow unto God.

Mr. *Stock* in his Funeral Sermon at the Burial of the Lord *Harrington*, ſpeaking of his Charity, declared, that in his life-time he gave the tenth part of his yearly Revenue to the Poor. Mr. *Gataker* in his Funeral Sermon at the Burial of Mr. *John Parker* Merchant, and Citizen of *London*, ſpeaking of his Charity, ſaith,

That

That *at his firſt effectual Call, among other things he then reſolved upon, this was one, to ſet apart every year a tenth of his gain for the relief of the poor and needy; and that God from that time abundantly advanced his Eſtate.* And queſtionleſs, if ſuch *Merchants*, who uſually inſure their goods upon their apprehenſion of danger at Sea, would ſincerely promiſe unto God, in teſtimony of their thankfulneſs unto him, the tenth of what ſhould come ſafe into their hands, they might receive far greater Returns than they do.

In the Life of Dr. *Hammond*, written by Dr. *Fell*, I find this expreſſion; '*The rate and ſum of what the* 'Doctor *devoted, was the tenth of all his Income, wherein* 'he was ſo ſtrictly punctual, that commonly the firſt thing he 'did, was to compute and ſeparate the Poor Mans ſhare. And how his Stock increaſed, notwithſtanding his abundant giving out to the relief of others, the Hiſtory at large declareth. The like I read in the Life of Mr. *William Wheatly*, Miniſter of *Banbury*, how for many years he ſet apart the *tenth* of his yearly comings in, both out of his *Temporal* and *Eccleſiaſtical* Means, and that *his Eſtate proſpered the better after he took that courſe.* To theſe I could add many more out of the Lives of good and charitable men, and out of ſeveral Funeral Sermons which are printed and publiſhed; and could name multitudes of men now living, who have devoted the like, and greater portion out of their Eſtates for charitable uſes; and are ready to atteſt the truth of this diſcourſe, *That they are no loſers, but great gainers in Temporals, by what they have given to the Poor.*

Mr. *Richard Baxter* in his Learned and Uſeful Piece, called, *A Chriſtian Directory*, *Part* the 4th. *fol.* 195. of the *quota pars*, what proportion is meet for moſt men to devote for charitable uſes, whether the tenth part of their increaſe be not ordinarily a fit proportion? hath this expreſſion:

'*Though the proportion of the tenth part is too much for* 'ſome, *and much too little for others; yet for the moſt* 'part, *I think it as likely a proportion as it is fit for ano-* 'ther to preſcribe in particular.

Yet

Yet I would not be thought to impoſe this as a proportion to be obſerved by all; for all mens hearts are not alike inlarged with love and bounty: and ſome there are who have no more than is neceſſary for the comfortable ſupport of themſelves and Family, from whom leſs is required for the relief of others. But I would adviſe ſuch whom the Lord hath bleſſed with a plentiful Eſtate, ſo that their neceſſary expences are, or might be, far leſs than their Incomes, to devote a *tenth part* of their whole yearly Income to charitable uſes: I ſay, of their *whole yearly Income*, without firſt deducting any part thereof for Diet, Cloaths, or other neceſſary expences; for the tenth of the remainder will be a very inconſiderable proportion for a rich man to devote to Charity, and far ſhort of that which the Scripture ſeemeth to call for.

And know aſſuredly, that this courſe is ſo far from being a means of diminiſhing your Stock and Store, that if it be managed as it ought, according to the forementioned Rules and Directions, it is the ſureſt and ſafeſt means, the moſt compendious courſe of increaſing it, through the ſecret bleſſing of God which accompanieth the ſame; which hath been ſufficiently demonſtrated in the foregoing diſcourſe.

2. *Be careful on whom thou beſtoweſt thine Alms*; for by giving to ſuch common Beggars who are able to work, and yet are ſo lazy that they will not work, but would live by the ſweat of other mens brows: I ſay, by relieving ſuch, we ſhall both maintain them in their idle and wicked life; and they who are truly poor, and ought to be looked upon as the proper Objects of our Charity, will be neglected, or at leaſt ſcanted of that which of right belongeth to them.

I am not againſt the relieving of all Beggars, ſome of them I know are blind, others lame, aged, and paſt their work; theſe *impotent* poor, in regard of their preſent condition, are Objects of Charity; but not the *impudent* Poor, who have ſtrength enough to work, and will not, thoſe *Canting Vagrants*, who are the burthen of the earth, and ſhame of the Kingdom, for theſe I have no Charity: Neither had the Apoſtle S. *Paul*, who

towards

towards Gods Poor was full of compaſſion; but for the *Devils Poor*, he gave this Command, 2 *Theſ.* 3. 10. *That if any would not work, neither ſhould he eat*; that hunger and neceſſity might drive them to labour. *Eraſmus* mentions a kind of mercy meeteſt for ſuch, 'tis *miſericordia puniens*: Surely the *Whip* is more their due, than *food*; *Bridewell* to entertain them, than an *Almshouſe*.

III. Another *Means* for the attaining this Grace of Chriſtian Charity, is this; *Be earneſt with God in prayer, that he would be pleaſed to beſtow upon thee that adorning and inriching Grace of Charity, and accept thy Offering.* This Sacrifice, as it muſt be offered up to Heaven, ſo it muſt be fetched from Heaven. The gift of a merciful and charitable heart, is one of thoſe gifts that come down from above, even the Father of Lights, *Jam.* 1. 17. If thou receiveſt not this gift from God, thy poor Brother is like to have no gift from thee. Now it muſt be thy prayer that muſt fetch down this gift from God. Lift up thine heart to the Lord, and beg a merciful and compaſſionate Soul; beg of God that he would make thee ready to every good work, willing to communicate to the poor Members of Chriſt, according to thine ability, and their neceſſity; that thereby thou mayeſt lay up in ſtore for thy ſelf a good Foundation againſt the time to come, and ſo lay hold on Eternal Life: Pray for a willing heart, and pray for acceptance of thy gift, that thine Alms may be ſuch a Sacrifice, and ſo offered up, that therewith the Lord may be well pleaſed.

Having thus ſhewed you the *Means* on our part to be performed for attaining and exerciſing this Grace of Charity; I ſhall cloſe this diſcourſe with anſwering two or three Objections.

*Object.* 1. Some object the greatneſs of their charge, the number of their Children, who muſt be cared for, and thereupon have little to give to the Poor.

Anſw. 1. *Haſt thou many Children, thou oughteſt the rather to be charitable, that thereby thou mayeſt intail Gods bleſſing upon them, which is the beſt portion, and ſureſt inheritance thou canſt leave them*; that will ſecure their Stock,

Stock, and improve their Store; whereas unmercifulneſs to the Poor will intail a *Curſe*, inſtead of a *Bleſſing*, upon the Perſons and Eſtates of thy Children.

2. *Thou who objecteſt the number of thy Children as a Plea for thy Parſimony, how juſtly may God then leſſen the number, and ſo take away thin excuſe, by taking thy Children from thee.*

3. *Suppoſe thou haſt many Children, it may be half a ſcore, reckon God for one more; give unto him a Childs Portion*; I mean, beſtow upon the Poor, for his ſake, as much every Year, as one Child ſtands thee in; give unto them a Childs Portion, and I dare boldly ſay, thou wilt not be the poorer, but rather a great gainer. For thereby wilt thou procure Gods bleſſing upon thy ſelf and Children, which in truth is all in all; and without which, all is like to come to nothing, as we ſee by daily experience; which made S. *Auſtin* ſay, *Hæredi præſtabis, quicquid miſericordiæ cauſa de ejus portione detraxeris, Aug. de Tempore, Serm.* 76. That which thou giveſt out of thine eſtate to charitable uſes, will be no loſs to thy Children, but rather a great advantage. Yea the Spirit of God in ſetting forth the happineſs of a merciful man, ſaith, his Children ſhall fare the better for his goodneſs and bounty; as Pſal. 37. 16. *He is ever merciful, and lendeth, and his ſeed is bleſſed*; that is, God will bleſs his Children, not only with Spiritual, but alſo with Temporal bleſſings.

2. *Obj.* Many Profeſſors, in theſe days, are very barren in good works.

Anſw. *Fruitleſs and uncharitable Chriſtians may make a Profeſſion of Religion, but queſtionleſs they are no ſound Chriſtians, nor ſincere Profeſſors.* For moſt certain it is, that *the Elect of God do put on bowels of mercy and compaſſion*; as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh, *Col.* 3. 12. And therefore an *uncharitable Chriſtian* is a meer contradiction. For who is a Chriſtian but he who conforms himſelf to the Law, and Life of Chriſt? The ſubſtance of whoſe Law is *Charity*, and whoſe Life was ſpent in going about doing good, ſome way or other, to the Soul and Bodies of Men and Women.

Whoſoever therefore having this Worlds goods, ſeeth

seeth his Brother in need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, and will not communicate any thing considerable towards his necessities; let his Profession be never so specious and glorious in the eyes of men, yet certainly he is but a rotten Professor, and dissembling Hypocrite in the sight of God. In *Matth.* 25. 23. we find that liberality to the Members of Christ is made the special Touch-stone of true Faith and Godliness. For they are the charitable persons, who at the great day of Judgment will appear to be the *Sheep* at Christs right hand, and shall hear that joyful Sentence of Absolution? *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the World: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in; I was naked, and ye cloathed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.*

And on the other side, all unmerciful men who have not relieved Christ in his Members, whatsoever Profession of Religion they have made here in this World, yet at the last day will appear to be the *Goats* set on Christs left hand, and shall hear that dreadful Sentence of Condemnation, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil, and his Angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye cloathed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.* Hence it appeareth, that as mercy and bounty to the poor Members of Christ, is a conspicuous evidence of true Faith, and sincere godliness in a Christian, and signally declares him Pious; so illiberality, and unmercifulness to them, is a clear mark of infidelity, and ungodliness, and signally declare him an unbeliever; and so a wicked and prophane person: Therefore I should much question the sincerity of their Faith and Piety, who making a profession of Religion, shew little or no Charity to the poor Members of Christ. For as the Apostle *James* speaketh, Ch. 1. v. 21. *Pure Religion, and undefiled before God, and the Father, is this, to visit the Fatherless*

*and*

*and Widdows in their affliction*: Implying, that works of Mercy and Charity rightly performed, are clear evidences of the truth of our Religion, and of the ſincerity of our Profeſſion. And if you look into the Scriptures, you ſhall ſcarce read of a man truly godly, but you may read alſo, that he was merciful, and charitable, forward to every good work.

So much ſhall ſuffice for this Point of Doctrine.

A word or two for my Brethrens ſake of the *firſt Doctrine* raiſed from the foregoing verſe, which is the principal Point there intended by our Saviour; which was this.

17. *That all needful ſuccour, and good entertainment, ought to be afforded in ſpecial to the Miniſters of the Goſpel.*

Our Saviaur in commending Objects to our Charity, in the firſt place mentioneth *Prophets*, and the *Righteous Ones*, ſaying, *He that receiveth a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet, ſhall receive a Prophets reward*: and then addeth, *He that receiveth a Righteous Man in the name of a Righteous Man*, &c.

Indeed, ſo general muſt be the Extent and Emanation of our Charity, that it muſt not exclude any who are in want and diſtreſs. For though we may, and ought to put a difference between men upon whom we beſtow our Charity, yet ought we not to reſtrain it from any men who are in want; but muſt act the *Grace of Charity* towards them who have not the *Grace of Faith*. Yea, *we ought to do good unto all*, as the Apoſtle exhorteth, *Gal.* 6. 13. *But eſpecially unto them who are of the Houſhold of Faith*. And among them, chiefly to the *Miniſters of Chriſt*. So as this Object of *Charity: Prophet*, is not here to be taken excluſively, but by way of *Eminency* and *Preferment*: Miniſters are *before*, and *above others*, with more *readineſs* and *chearfulneſs* to be miniſtred unto.

The people of *Iſrael*, we read, were commanded once and again not to leave nor forſake their *Levites*, eſpecially when they were reduced into any ſtreights and exegencies; as *Deut.* 12. 19. and 14. 27. Then much

much less should the *Ministers of the Gospel* be left and forsaken by the people of God, when they lie under any want or distress.

The examples of Gods people that have gone before us in the performance of this duty, are many, both in the Old and New Testament. It is recorded to the perpetual praise and commendation of *Obadiah*, that he hid the *Prophets of God* by fifty in a Cave, from the cruelty of *Jezabel*, and sustained them with food, and ministred all things necessary unto them, 1 *King.* 18. 13. We read likewise how the Widdow of *Sarephath* nourished the Prophet *Elijah* in her house for many days and years, even so long as the Famine continued, 1 *King.* 17. 15, 16. The kindness of the good *Shunamite* to the Prophet *Elisha*, is largely reported, 2 *King.* 4. 8. &c. *It fell on a day that* Elisha *passed to* Shunem, *where was a great Woman, and she constrained him to eat bread*; that is, to refresh himself with food. *And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread.* Having found good entertainment; and hearty welcom, he did the oftner visit the Family. *And she said unto her Husband, Behold now I perceive, that this is an holy Man of God which passeth by us continually, let us make a little Chamber, I pray thee, on the wall, and let us set for him there a Bed, and a Table, and a Stool, and a Candlestick.* Under these, other necessary accommodations are comprized. The good Woman desired of her Husband, *that a Chamber might be made for the Prophet on the wall*; perhaps not that she wanted room in her house to lodge him in, but because she considered, that the noise of a great Family might be some disturbance to the Prophets study and devotion; therefore thought it convenient to provide such a Chamber for him, where he might be more retired, and have the free ingress and egress, that by those accommodations he might be incouraged the oftner to take up his lodging there.

*Rom.* 16. 2. It is set down as the height and Crown of *Phebe*'s good works, that she had been *a succourer of the Apostle* Paul *in his wants and straits.* And in 2 *Tim.* 1. 16. we read how *Onesiphorus* refreshed and relieved the

*Apostle*

*Apoſtle* in his ſuffering condition, and *was not aſhamed of his Chain*; that is, though he were a Priſoner, and under reſtraint for the Goſpels ſake, yet *Oneſiphorus* owned him, ſhewed him all reſpect, ſuccoured and relieved him in that his low condition. *Gaius* likewiſe, a godly, wealthy Citizen of *Corinth*, is famous for that kind entertainment and ſuccour which he gave to the *Apoſtle*, and the Church with him, *Rom.* 16. 23.

It is recorded to the commendation of King *Edward* the Sixth, that he afforded all needful ſuccour, and good entertainment, to *Bucer*, *Fagius*, and other Divines, when they fled into this Kingdom, by reaſon of the troubles in their own Nation. And *Beza* in his Epiſtle *ad Regem Jacobum*, maketh an honourable mention of a liberal Collection of the Church of *Scotland* ſent to the *French Miniſters*, who were baniſhed *Religionis cauſa*.

Here are fair Copies for us to write after. And indeed why are theſe things written, and left upon Record to Poſterity, but for our learning? Not ſo much for our *admiration*, as for our *imitation*, that we might follow their ſteps, and write after their Copy; which S. *Paul* teſtifies of the *Macedonians*, 2 Cor. 9. 2. *How that very many of them were ſtirred up, and provoked to a liberal contribution to the poor Saints at* Jeruſalem, *by the forwardneſs and zeal of the* Corinthians. And S. *Auſtin (Confeſ. lib. 9. cap. 2.)* confeſſeth, that *the examples of Gods Servants did burn and conſume his own luke-warmneſs, and their fervent zeal ſet an edge on his Devotion.*

To theſe Examples I ſhall add a few REASONS for the better inforcing this Duty upon you.

Reaſ. I. *Becauſe Miniſters being ſupported, are like to be moſt ſerviceable to the Church of God.* They are *Spiritual Fathers*, to beget men unto Chriſt. They are his *Ambaſſadours*, and ſtand in his ſtead to reveal the Myſteries of the Kingdom, ſent forth to be Reconcilers betwixt God and this ſinful World, to pray and beſeech them to be reconciled unto God, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. Their work is to bear the Name of God, to publiſh the Salvation of God before the world; *to open the eyes of the blind, and to turn them from darkneſs to light, and*

*from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveneſs of ſins, and an inheritance among them that are ſanctified.* In which reſpect *Miniſters of the Goſpel* are more uſeful and ſerviceable in their Generation, than either *Lawyers*, *Phyſitians*, or *Tradeſmen*, which yet are uſeful enough.

1. *Lawyers* indeed may be a means of ſettling your Right in your Goods and Lands: But *Miniſters* of ſettling your Right to your Heavenly Inheritance.

2. *Phyſitians* may cure the Maladies of your Bodies; but *Miniſters* are ſent to cure the diſeaſes of your Souls.

3. *Merchants*, and all ſorts of Tradeſmen may repleniſh a Land with all manner of Commodities neceſſary for this life: But *Miniſters* only bring in ſuch heavenly and Spiritual Treaſures as ſpring up into the Everlaſting Treaſure.

So that by ſupplying their bodily wants, you do comfort and refreſh the Souls of many. And what better Charity imaginable, than by relieving the temporal wants of ſome few, to further the everlaſting Salvation of many? Oh what cauſe will their Souls have to bleſs God to all Eternity for your Charity, who have been converted by the Miniſtry of thoſe whom you have refreſhed and ſupported in their work!

Reaſ. II. *Another Reaſon may be taken from the conſideration of the quality of the perſons for whom I am pleading*: They are not ſo mean as outwardly they appear. They whom you behold ſo poorly clad, walking ſo dejectedly, being deſtitute of many outward comforts, are men indowed with many ſingular Prerogatives and Priviledges, not only above the reſt of Gods people, but likewiſe above the moſt glorious Angels.

Compare them firſt with the people of God; they are called the *Lords Sheep*, theſe *the Shepherds of the Flock*, Ezek. 34. 2. They *Children* in Gods Family, theſe *Spiritual Fathers*, who by the ſeed of the Word beget men unto God, 1 *Cor.* 4.15. Therefore the Spirit of God vouchſafeth them this dignity, to be called συνεργοι τῦ Θεῦ, *Fellow-labourers with God.*

Con-

Concerning *Angels*; true it is, that they and Miniſters are *Fellow-ſervants, Rev.* 22. 9. But yet Miniſters have ſundry Prerogatives above them.

1. *Angels rejoyce at the converſion of a ſinner*, Luke 15. 10. But by the Miniſtery of *Prophets*, ſinners are converted unto God, *Act.* 26. 18.

2. An Angel was ſent to *Cornelius*, to adviſe him whither to go to be inſtructed; but a Miniſter inſtructed him in the way of Life, *Act.* 10. 6. 34.

3. Was the word of Reconciliation ever committed to Angels? to Miniſters it is committed, 2 *Cor.* 5. 18. It is obſervable, that the Embaſſage of Miniſters is not ſimply ἀγγελία, *a Meſſage*, but εὐαγγέλιον, *the Goſpel*, the gladſom tydings of Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt, *into which the Angels themſelves do deſire to look and pry*, as the Apoſtle *Peter* expreſſeth, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. The Lord hath alſo committed to his *Miniſters* the adminiſtration of the Sacraments, which are the Seals of his Covenant, whereby all his precious Promiſes are ratified, and confirmed unto us. So that as in reſpect of the rich treaſures of Gods Word committed to their diſpenſing, they are the *Lords Treaſurers*: So in reſpect of the Sacraments, they are the *Keepers of his Great Seal.* If theſe Officers be great under Mortal Princes, what are they under the King of Kings?

I have taken the liberty, in a few words, to ſet forth ſome of the Priviledges of the Miniſters of the Goſpel; partly for the comfort and conſolation of many of them under miſery and poverty, and partly for the incitation of others to afford them that *double honour* which the Apoſtle calls for, 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. Namely, the *honour of reſpect*, and the *honour of maintenance*, that they ſuffer them not to ſink under their burthen, but afford them ſome ſeaſonable ſuccour and relief, ſuitable to their preſent wants and neceſſities.

Reaſ. III. *Becauſe Miniſters are oftenеſt expoſed to ſufferings and diſtreſſes, and ſo have moſt need of relief.* The Bow of the Adverſaries of Religion is bent moſt againſt the Teachers and Leaders of the people. That word, 1 *King.* 22. 31. *Fight neither with ſmall or great, ſave only with the King of Iſrael*, is often changed into,

*Fight neither with ſmall or great, but only againſt the Prophets of the Lord.* Smite the *Shepherds*, and the *Sheep* will be ſcattered. Experience enough tells the world who they are that are ſet in the Front of the Battle, and who are the firſt that fall by the power of the Adverſaries. And *who ſhould be moſt in the eye of Charity, but thoſe that are moſt in the eye of malice?*

Beſides, For whoſe ſakes is it that Miniſters are ſo often brought ſo low? Is it not for your ſakes, whoſe Souls are dearer to them than their own ſubſtance? Is it not often upon this account, becauſe they will be faithful to you, and will not keep ſilence, nor ceaſe to watch over you; and to warn, and to inſtruct you from day to day?

Might they not ſave themſelves more whole, if they would hold their peace, and let the Devil alone to have his will of you? For your ſakes no doubt it is, that much of their ſufferings come upon them; and ſhall they be forſaken by you? The truth is, it is upon this account a piece of *Juſtice*, as well as a piece of *Charity*, to relieve and ſuccour them; and ſo you may do two good works in one; the ſame Alms may be both a work of Righteouſneſs, and a work of Mercy.

Reaſ. IV. *Your gratitude to God requireth a chearful performance of this Duty from you.* For wherein can you otherwiſe make a ſuitable return to God, for what he hath plentifully conferred on you, than by contributing ſome of your *Temporals* to them, from whom ye reap ſo much in *Spirituals*? The Lord of his free grace and rich mercy hath abounded to you in theſe outward things; *He hath given you richly all things to enjoy.* Yea, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaketh, *He hath loaded you with his benefits.* Now, not to return ſome part of your Eſtate to him, who hath given you all that you do enjoy, were ingratitude in the higheſt degree: And therefore how doth it concern you often to put the *Pſalmiſts* queſtion to your ſelves, *What ſhall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?* Pſalm 116. 12. Surely one kindneſs deſerveth another; as God hath been bountiful to you, ſure you are very unworthy if you be not bountiful to his. And how do you think he will take it

at

at your hands? Will he ever ſay to you, *Well done good and faithful Servant, thou haſt been faithful, a good Steward of my many gifts?* Or is it all one to you whether he ſay, *Well done, or not?*

And in regard you cannot directly and immediately requite him who is uncapable of being inriched by us, (*My goodneſs extendeth not to thee.* Pſalm 16. 2.) it will be your wiſdom to expreſs your thankfulneſs to God by being kind to his poor Relations. Now, who are nearer to God than his Miniſters? whom he hath appointed to ſtand in his room, to declare his mind unto his people; who are, as the mouth of the people unto God, ſo Gods Mouth unto the people; who are the *Meſſengers of the Lord of Hoſts*, by whoſe Miniſtry there is peace concluded, and Reconciliation proclaimed between God and Man. Surely what kindneſs you ſhew to theſe, he takes as done unto himſelf, *Matth.* 25. 40.

Reaſ. V. *Your relieving the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt, may in a ſenſe be ſaid to have ſomething more in it, than if you ſhould ſhew your Charity to himſelf in his own perſon, as being a ſign of greater love.* It is but an ordinary thing to return kindneſs to our deareſt Friends, but to extend our good will to their Relations, or ſervants for their ſakes, is an evidence of much greater love. For if upon their account only we do good unto theſe; how much more would it be judged we ſhould be ready to do it unto themſelves, if they ſtood in need of our help? And ſo will Chriſt look upon it: Our bounty expreſſed to his Miniſters he will receive as an Evidence of our more abundant love unto him, which he will in no wiſe forget, nor ſuffer to go unrewarded.

Reaſ. VI. *Such as relieve the poor Miniſters of Chriſt, ſhall have their bleſſing, the benefit of their prayers unto God.* They will bleſs you however, though you have no bleſſing for them. Though you have not an Alms for them, yet they will have a prayer for you. But their bowels being refreſhed by you, you may expect that their hearts will be the more inlarged for you; and this will be a far greater kindneſs than you can beſtow on them. Your gift cannot be worth their fervent prayers. In this reſpect it is much better to give, than

to receive; because he that receives hath but a perishing Alms, he that gives receives an abiding blessing, the blessing of prayers.

Herein did the Apostle S. *Paul* make a large requital to *Onesiphorus* for the kindness he shewed to him in his imprisonment; as you may read, 2 Tim. 1. 16. *The Lord give mercy unto the House of* Onesiphorus, *for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my Chain.* As if he had said, I received much comfort and refreshment from *Onesiphorus* when I was in Prison, for the which I beseech the Father of all mercies, to shew mercy unto him, and his, by blessing him, and his whole Family, with all blessings, both temporal, spiritual, and eternal. And indeed what blessing can that man want, who hath a share in many Ministers prayers? which are available for the obtaining of all good things at the hand of God; as for themselves, so for others. Yea, the very work of Charity doth bespeak a blessing from God. As the blood of *Abel* is said to cry to the Lord for a Curse or Vengeance upon *Cain*, so every act of Charity cryeth to God for a blessing upon the Charitable. Our very acts of Charity, in relieving the wants of the poor, and refreshing their bowels, do pray and cry to God for his blessing upon us, and ours.

Reas. VI. *Your Charity to them will be hereafter rewarded with everlasting glory and happiness in the Kingdom of Heaven.* This reason our Saviour himself giveth in these words; *He that receiveth a Prophet in the name of a Prophet, shall receive a Prophets reward*; whereby is meant that surpassing and excellent weight of glory, which cannot be expressed by the tongue of men or Angels. Yea, by the reward of a *Prophet*, seemeth to be implied the highest degree of heavenly glory. For *Daniel* 12. 3. it is said, *That they that be wise*, that is, the righteous, who are indowed with true spiritual wisdom, being lightned by the Spirit of God, *shall shine as the brightness of the Firmament*; *but they that turn many to righteousness*, which is the work of Prophets, *shall shine as the Stars for ever and ever.*

Now by your bounty to the *Prophets of God*, you may come to partake of their reward. So that it is your

your own concernment to contribute liberally towards their relief.. Not that your Charity to them doth merit that glorious reward; but in regard of the promiſe of God made to all thoſe, who do exerciſe the ſame towards his Miniſters, it ſhall be truly given unto them.

For a word of *Application.*

*Oh how ſhould the conſideration of theſe things ſtir up the hearts of all, eſpecially ſuch as have a bleſſing in their hand, an Eſtate to give, to draw forth their Souls, and reach forth their hands to the ſupply of theſe wanting ſervants of God.* Surely this is a time wherein Chriſt is trying your love to him, by your Charity to them. Are you not concerned to make proof of your love to Chriſt? Have you not an opportunity before you, and a loud Call from Heaven, to prove it in this way? Can you not hear him that ſaid once to *Peter*, John 21.16. *Loveſt thou me? Feed my Sheep.* Can you not hear the ſame Voice calling to you, *Loveſt thou me? Feed my Shepherds.* Sure thou art very deaf to the Voice *of the Providences of this day*, if thou do not hear this Call. And will you prove that you have no love to Chriſt? What do you elſe if you ſuffer his to ſtarve, when you have wherewith to feed them?

Beloved, it is through Gods free Grace, and rich bounty, that you enjoy ſuch plenty of outward good things, when many of his Miniſters are in great want. What you have, you have received from him. Is it not then moſt juſt and reaſonable, that you ſhould return back ſome part of your Eſtates unto God, by relieving his Miniſters, in teſtimony of your love and thankfulneſs unto him for what you have? Hath God given you hundreds and thouſands? and will not you part with a few pounds or ſhillings when he calls aloud unto you for the ſame, as now he doth in theſe days? Though the earth be his, and the fulneſs thereof, yet (in a ſenſe) he hath ſometimes need of your Eſtates. *Matth.* 25. 35. Chriſt telleth you of his wants, and ſheweth you how, and when he is relieved.

Though for the preſent you enjoy manifold bleſſings, yet how eaſily can he pluck them out of your mouths;

and if you will not perform your duty, thruſt you down from among the Givers, to take your place among the Receivers! Certainly the communicating a part, is your beſt way to ſecure the remainder, and to ſeaſon and ſanctifie it to your more comfortable uſe.

*Luke* 11. 41. Saith our Saviour, *Give Alms of ſuch things as you have, and behold all things are clean unto you*; that is, lawful to be uſed. The Metaphor is taken from the Law, whereby many things were counted *unclean*, and ſo unlawful for uſe; they might not be touched or medled with. Yea by the inference of the Apoſtle; *Give Alms of ſuch things as you have; and behold all things are clean unto you:* He ſeemeth to allude to another Rite of the Law about *Firſt-fruits*, *Tythes*, and *Free-offerings*; by giving which to the Lord, all the reſt which they had were ſecured, ſanctified, and made clean. So that Charitable men are they, who may with the more freedom, quietneſs, and comfort uſe what they have. Who that hath any deſire to be accepted and approved of God, would not have his perſon, and the actions which he doth, and things which he poſſeſſeth, to be clean? Whatſoever is unclean, is odious and abominable in Gods ſight? unclean perſons might not approach to Gods Sanctuary, nor meddle with ſacred matters. If they were not cleanſed, they were to be cut off from Gods people, *Numb.* 19. 20. *Levit.* 7. 20. and every unclean thing was an *abomination.*

This therefore muſt needs be a ſtrong perſwaſive to put in practiſe the Counſel of our Saviour, in *giving Alms of ſuch things as we have, that ſo all things may be clean*, and ſanctified *unto us.* What's clean you may uſe with Gods good leave and allowance; (clean things might be eaten) and where you have Gods good leave, you may expect his bleſſing. It's ſin to eat where Gods portion is among it.

The truth is, it is the great miſtake of many, to think that all their goods are their own, and that they are *Abſolute Lords* and *Owners* of all which they poſſeſs; whereas indeed they are rather *Stewards*, than *Lords* and *Owners* of this worlds goods; all is the Lords.

God

God of his infinite wiſdom hath committed to ſome a greater portion of them, than to others, yet not to be impropriated to themſelves, but they muſt give him his ſpecial part, to which his have as good a right as themſelves unto the reſt, ſaving only that they may not lay hands on it themſelves, until you put it into their hands. But as they may not take it out *of yours*; ſo you may not keep it out *of their hands*. Therefore *Solomon* ſpeaking of the right which the Poor have to a part of rich mens Eſtates, ſaith, Prov. 3. 27. *Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thy hand to do it.* So that relieving the Poor is not only an act of *Mercy*, left to our choice to do, or leave undone; but alſo, as I ſaid before, an act of *Juſtice*, to the performance whereof we ſtand bound. Hence to *give Alms*, and *to do Righteouſneſs and Juſtice*, are oft in Scripture put the one for the other, both ſignifying the ſame thing. Therefore the *Septuagint* have rendred the Hebrew word ſignifying *Righteouſneſs*, in *Deut.* 24. 14. ἐλεημοσύνην, *Alms-deeds*. And in *Pſalm* 112.9. it is ſaid, *His Righteouſneſs endureth for ever*; that is, his *Alms*, or his *Mercifulneſs*; as is clear from the foregoing words, *He hath diſperſed, he hath given to the Poor*; *his Righteouſneſs endureth for ever*: Whereby is implyed, that *giving of Alms is one ſpecial branch of that Righteouſneſs and Juſtice we owe to our poor Neighbours?*

And dareſt thou yet hold it in thy hand? Wilt thou wrong the *Almighty* of his *right*, and rob his *Poor* of his *due?* If it be nothing with thee to be unmerciful, is it nothing neither to be a *Robber? a Robber of God? Will a man rob God?* Mal. 3. 8. Dares any man be ſo wicked? How canſt thou but expect that he will make a *Forcible Entry upon thee*, and take what is his own, and ſeal a *Writ of Ejectment againſt thee*, and turn thee out of all that ever thou haſt? Look not to be long in quiet poſſeſſion of what thou haſt; but fear leſt either God ſhould take thine Eſtate from thee, or thee from thine Eſtate, and give thee thy portion with *Dives*, who becauſe he denied his *Crumbs* to ſatisfie poor *Lazarus* his hunger, was himſelf denied a *drop of cold water* to quench his own heat and thirſt, *Luke* 16. 23. Upon which

which words S. *Auſtin* thus gloſſeth, *Ideo rogans* Dives *non exauditur in tormentis, quia rogantem pauperem non exaudivit.* Therefore was not *Dives* heard when he prayed in torments, becauſe he hearkened not to the Poor that begged of him when he was upon the Earth. *Aug. Serm. de Divite.*

Let me add a few quickning words to ſet home what hath been ſpoken, by theſe following Queſtions.

*Queſt.* 1. Now at length, *What doſt thou think of Mercy and Bounty to the Poor?*

1. *Is there not an excellency in it!* Oh how much of God is there in it! *There is Faith in it:* He that will caſt his bread upon the waters, is it not a ſure ſign that he believes God, who hath ſaid, that it ſhall be returned again? *There's the love of God in it*: He that *ſees his Brother in need, and ſhutteth up the bowels of his compaſſions from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* And he that openeth his bowels, and draws forth his Soul to Gods hungry ones, who can deny but the love of God dwelleth in that man? *It is the Image of Gods goodneſs.* God is a merciful God, and his mercy is his glory; and this glory of God ſhineth forth in his merciful ſervants. *There is Self-denial in it.* Self would keep all; Fleſh would hold back; it cannot ſpare for God; 'tis a ſign that Self is laid low, that the Fleſh is kept under, that the Intereſt of God is the ſwaying Intereſt, when whatever God will have, this Self is not ſuffered to keep back. Is there ſo much of God in mercifulneſs, and is there not an excellency in it?

2. *Is there not a neceſſity of it?* Shall the mercileſs ever obtain mercy? Canſt thou hope for mercy who wilt ſhew no mercy.

Qu. 2. *What doſt thou think of thy ſelf?* Art thou merciful, or mercileſs? How doſt thou find it? Is thine heart open? are thy bowels open? or are they ſtill ſhut? Doſt thou feel that heart of thine inclined and reſolved to open thy hands, and to diſperſe, and that liberally, the good things thou haſt received, as a good Steward of the manifold gifts of God? Or doſt thou yet feel that the door is ſhut, thine heart is hardned againſt ſhewing kindneſs to the Lord? Give thy plain judgment,

judgment, what thinkeſt thou? Art thou a merciful man, or mercileſs? and if mercileſs, how doſt thou hope to obtain mercy?

Qu. 3. *What doſt thou think of thy worldly goods?*

1. *Are they not thy Talents, committed to thee for thy Lords uſe?* Muſt thou not be accountable to him, how they have been laid out? Will it be a comfortable account when thou muſt bring in thy Bill: ſo much for thy pride, ſo much for thine appetite, or all hoarded up for thy covetouſneſs, and nothing, or but little for God?

2. *Are they more worth than Treaſures in Heaven?* Is it more to thine advantage to be rich in this worlds goods, than to be rich in good works? Doſt thou in good earneſt judge, that thy laying up treaſures on earth is better husbandry, than thy laying up in ſtore for thy ſelf a good foundation againſt the time to come?

Qu. 4. *What doſt thou think of the ſtate of many of the ſervants of God in this Age?* Are there no wanting ones? no diſtreſſed ones? What, neither amongſt Miniſters, nor Chriſtians? Are they all provided for? Do not many of them eat the bread, and drink the waters of affliction? Is it not very ſtrait and very ſhort with them? Do but enquire after their condition, and thou wilt find it ſo. Art thou one of thoſe that careſt not how it fares with the poor Friends of Chriſt? Are they not worth the enquiring, and looking after? or at leaſt, Is not he worthy, whoſe they are, and whom they ſerve? Is not Chriſt worthy, for whoſe ſake thou ſhouldſt ſhew kindneſs to his? How will he take thy neglect of them? Remember that word, Matth. 25. 45. *Inaſmuch as ye did it not to theſe, ye did it not to me.*

Qu. 5. *What wilt thou do for the future?* What ſhall be the ſucceſs of theſe few words that are written for thy learning? What art thou reſolved upon? for mercy, or for cruelty? Conſult thine own heart; lay not by this little Book, till thou art come to a reſolution one way or other, either to accept, or reject this counſel, which in the Name of the Lord is offered thee for thy good. Oh ſhew thy ſelf a man in whoſe Soul Chriſt hath an intereſt, and ſo great an intereſt, that thou wilt do any thing at his word; pity at his word, relieve at his word,

word, give, lend, feed, cloath, refreſh the bowels of his needy ones: Let thy ſoul ſay, Lord, at thy word I will do it: here's my bread, and my fleſh, and my money, command what thou wilt of it, I will not ſay thee nay. Thou haſt given me a large portion, and every one of thy ſervants that thou appointeſt to receive it, ſhall have their part; for thy ſake, Lord, they ſhall have it. Thine I am, and thine is all that I have; ſhew me thy pleaſure, how much, and how often, and where, and to whom I ſhall beſtow it, and through the grace of God there it ſhall go.

Friend, Wilt thou ſay thus? Wilt thou in the preſence of the Lord come to this gracious reſolution? or canſt thou yet find in thine heart to deny thy Lord, and continue to be as hard-hearted, and cloſe-handed as thou wer't wont to be? Dare not to ſay, Lord, my goods are mine own, I owe thee nothing: Dread ſuch thoughts, that how much ſoever thou haſt, the ſervants of Chriſt ſhall be nothing the better for it.

Once again conſider, thou art put to this choice, either to accept of the Counſel of Chriſt, or to reject it; which of the two wilt thou do? If thou reſolveſt not on mercy, and liberality, thou rejecteſt the Word of the Lord; and if thou rejecteſt his Word, thou rejecteſt the Lord, and therein ſayeſt, He ſhall be no Lord for me. But if thou acceepteſt, then go, and do accordingly: Let the hunger, and the thirſt, and the nakedneſs, the wants and diſtreſſes of his ſervants feel in that relief they ſhall receive from thee, that thou art a man to whom the Lord hath not ſpoken in vain. Let them feel it preſently, and let them feel it conſtantly; this year, and the next year, and the next, even whilſt they have need to receive, and thou haſt it by thee to give. This do, and the Lord *accept thee*; *remember all thy offering, and accept all thy Sacrifices*; *the Lord hear thee in the day of thy trouble*; *the Name of the God of* Jacob *defend thee*: *The Lord grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counſel*: *The Lord remember thee with the favour he beareth unto his Children, and viſit thee with his Salvation.*

FINIS.